

APOLOGY

For the Liberties of the Churches in
New England:

To which is prefix'd,
A Discourse concerning
Congregational Churches. *L*

By **SAMUEL MATHER, M.A.**
Pastor of a Church in *Boston, New England.*

—*Sed tamen meorum Periculorum Rationes Utilitas Respublica vincat. CICER. Orat. IV. in Catalin.*

—*Delicatus Amator est CHRISTUS: Non potest amare Synagogam praeiis Ceremoniis ac vetusta Legis studio rugosam.—*
Quod aberrat a sacris Voluminibus non est CHRISTI. —

Sed falsa Scripturarum Interpretatio vera Interpretatione refutanda est.

DESIDER. ERASM. Roterod. *Symbol. Cateches. IV.*

—*Require of Christians only to believe in CHRIST, and to call no Man Master but Him only: Let those leave claiming Infallibility, that have no Right to it; and let them, that in their Words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their Actions: In a Word, take away Tyranny, which is the Devil's Instrument to support Errors and Superstitions and Impieties in the several Parts of the World, which could not otherwise withstand the Power of Truth: I say, take away Tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full Liberty of captivating their Understandings to the Scripture only; that universal Liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendome to Truth and Unity.*

CHILLINGWORTH. Part I. Chap. IV. Sect. 16.

B O S T O N:

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APOLLO

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New England:

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One of the Congregational Churches

By SAMUEL MATHER, M.A.

Pastor of a Church in Boston, New England.



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1793.



To the Honorable

Mr. HOLDEN,

One of the Directors of the Bank of *England*,

At *London*.

Honorable Sir,

I Flatter my self, that You will not think it any Dishonor to You to be own'd *as a Friend of New-England*, especially in its best, its religious, Interests: And for this Reason I venture to dedicate the following Performance to You; desiring You to receive it as an Acknowledgment of Your many good and kind Offices towards us.

It may not be amiss to inform You, that many Eminent Persons, besides Your self, in our Mother-Kingdom have thought favourably concerning us and shew'd their Readiness to serve us. The catholic and excellent Dr. TILLOTSON, from his good Opinion of us, frequently concern'd himself for the Welfare of *New-England*, and intreated His Majesty King WILLIAM to shew the Marks of his peculiar Favour towards his faithful Subjects here, and once particularly was so free as to declare in the Audience of his Majesty, that *it would by no Means do well for Him to take away*
from

D E D I C A T I O N.

from the People of New-England any of their Privileges. And the meritorious Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. BURNET, besides many other weighty Expressions of his Kindness to New-England, was once so good as to profess before Dr. MATHER my honored Grandfather, that *he would on the first Opportunity declare openly in the House of Lords, that there was a greater Sacredness in the Charter of New-England than in those of the Corporations in England; because these were only Acts of Grace; whereas the Charter of New-England was a Contract between the King and the first Patentees: They promised the King to enlarge his Dominions on their own Charges, provided that they and their Posterity might enjoy such and such Privileges: And They had perform'd their Part: Now for the King to deprive their Posterity of the Privileges therein granted to them, it would carry the Face of Injustice in it.* And the good old Lord WHARTON, the last surviving Member of the famous Assembly of Divines that met at Westminster, whose Name should be very dear to every true New-English Man, upon presenting a Petition for New-England by my honored Grandfather, who was then in the Agency for this Province, was pleas'd to say with great Zeal and Earnestness to the King, that, *if he were sure to die the next Day, he would, as he now did, appear in behalf of this Country and solicit his Favour for it.* And, when one, from whom I have the Honour of immediately descending, wrote an Account concerning the Affairs of New-England to the late great and good my Lord Chancellor KING, he was pleas'd to write a Letter in Answer, wherein are these remarkable Passages; *The Account of your Country was very acceptable to me: And, wherein I can serve either it or you, I shall always be ready; It is Matter of Joy, that the Christian Religion and Learning do make such considerable Advances in those Parts of the World.* And indeed, wherever
the

DEDICATION.

the Christian Religion is proposed in its native Plainness and Simplicity, it is most likely to succeed.

Hence You see, Honorable Sir, that You are not singular in Your Regards towards us and in Your Inclinations and Endeavours to serve us, but have such good Company as may be an Encouragement unto You in them.

I need not mention to You the Claim, which these Churches have to their Religious Privileges as Men, as Christians, and as Protestants: But I would observe to You, that these Privileges are confirm'd unto them by the Charter, which was granted to this Province by King WILLIAM and Queen MARY of glorious and immortal Memory.

And I would further acquaint You, that, since the Grant of our valuable Charter, the same was ratified and confirmed by his most excellent Majesty King GEORGE the First; and there has a Law pass'd in this Province in the fourth and fifth of WILLIAM and MARY, wherein it is expressly provided, that the respective Churches in this Province shall enjoy all their Privileges and Freedoms respecting Divine Worship, Church Order and Discipline, and shall be encouraged in the peaceable and regular Profession and Practice thereof: Which Law has bin as it were touch'd by the Royal Sceptre: For it has bin approved by his Majesty of Great Britain: So that, Honorable Sir, the Liberties of these Churches must be deem'd to be as Sacred Things as the Ecclesiastical Liberties of the National Churches of England and Scotland.

Besides, Sir, I can truly affirm, not only concerning the Church of which I am the unworthy Servant, but also in behalf of all the Churches of our blessed SAVIOUR in New-England walking in the
same

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same Faith and Order with our selves, that they maintain an inviolable Allegiance to his present Majesty of Great Brittain, as they did to his Godlike Father before Him, and that they firmly adhere to the Succession of the Imperial Crown of Great Britain in the present Royal Family: Nor, I am well assured, is there so much as one Person in the Communion of any of our Churches, but who has a cordial Regard and Affection for the Person and Family of our present most gracious Sovereign and yields a delightful Subjection to his auspicious Government.

Now considering these Things; and considering withal, what an *honorable*, as well as vastly beneficial, *Addition we have made to the wide and extended Empire of the King of Great Britain: I said, Honorable Addition:* For, while the other *British* Provinces and Colonies have for the most Part bin settled by more indifferent Persons, and for their Nourishment and Support have bin obliged to the Royal Bounties; This Province was founded by worthy Persons, considerable for their Families, Educations and Fortunes, as well as their superior Probity, Religion and Goodness, who with vast Hazard and Expence past the wide *Atlantic*, and consum'd their Treasures and lost their Lives in these, then barbarous and inclement, Regions, that so their Posterity might serve their GOD and their King in the peaceable Possession and Exercise of those Civil and Religious Privileges, which they had purchased and earned for them: Nor did the Crown advance any Sums of Money for assisting and encouraging them in their expensive and hazardous, but noble, Undertaking: Certainly, upon these Considerations, if we do not *challenge and claim as our Due*, we may well promise our selves however, *the Royal Favour and Protection in the undisturb'd Enjoyment of the Liberties of our Churches and Schools.*

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I have rehearsed these Things to You, Honorable Sir, that so, as You have Occasion for it, You may improve them to our Advantage and Comfort: In doing which, as You will *encrease our Obligations*, which already are very great unto You; so, I doubt not, You will *add to Your own Consolation and Joy*: For, as the wise Governour of the World has hitherto *blasted the Designs and Attempts of the Enemies to New-England*, so He has *liberally rewarded and blessed its Friends*: And it is our Prayer and Hope, that He would graciously continue to do so, and, in particular, that He would *remunerate and prosper the honored Mr. HOLDEN according to all the Good which he has done to the Churches and Country of New-England*.

The Task which is undertaken in the following Sheets, cannot by any Means be accounted singular; inasmuch as it is a common Thing in the *Republic of Letters* for the Learned to *apologize for those Disciplinary*, as well as *Doctrinal, Principles*, for which they have a peculiar and, as they imagine, just *Esteem and Veneration*.

But, as to the Freedom of this Dedication, altho' it may be a great and probably unbecoming one; yet You are well acquainted with the Occasion of it; and, I believe, my Country will judge, that You were highly deserving of this public Manifestation of Respect and Honor for You.

I cannot but hope, from what I have heard and learnt concerning Mr. HOLDEN's generous Sentiments, that the following Attempt will be acceptable unto You. But, however this may be, give me Leave to beg the further Continuance of Your
Re-

DEDICATION

Regards and Kindnesses to my Country, and please
to think well of him, who desires to be numbered,

Honorable Sir,

among Your most respectful Friends

and obedient humble Servants,

Boston, New England,
March 1. 1738.

S. MATHER.



THE PREFACE.

BEING sensible, that *long Life is not to be depended on* here below, I have thought it advisable to leave *some abiding Testimonies that I have lived* (a) behind me in the World; and I have determin'd to bear and leave my Testimony, such as it is, to the Order of the Gospel in the Churches of New-England.

As many of our Protestant Brethren abroad, so most of our People at Home, must certainly have *some Knowledge of the Privileges* claim'd by these Churches and the Reasons of their Attachment unto them.

But, inasmuch as They may be desirous of a *further Acquaintance* with our Religious Privileges and *what we have to offer in Defence of them*; I have therefore thought it proper for their Sakes to prepare and publish the following Apology, wherein I have endeavour'd to illustrate and confirm the more distinguishing Privileges of these Churches.

That so this Attempt might be more fully and effectually answer'd, I have consulted the publish'd Works and many of the Manuscripts of the Fathers of New-England, I have search'd the Records of the Primitive Church, I have read a considerable Number of later Writers, and, in fine, I have examin'd the Writings of the Inspired Apostles with Industry and Care: And hence I have bin enabled to prepare the ensuing Apology, and offer

(a) *Quatenus nobis denegatur diu vivere, relinquamus aliquid, quo nos vixisse testemur. Plin. lib. 3. Epist. 8. Caninio.*

offer it to the Consideration of my Countrymen and all our Protestant Brethren.

By this Apology They will soon see, that we do not think *Churches are such Machines*, as many on the other Side of the *Atlantic* take them to be, *contriv'd and to be improv'd for the outward Advantage of some sort of Persons*; but that they are *Means for the Edification and spiritual Advantage of the Faithful*, which they are oblig'd to respect and observe in Obedience to JESUS CHRIST our Saviour and supreme LORD: For, to use the Words of the learned Abbot FLEURY concerning his *History*, which may properly be applied to our Apology and used concerning it, *In This we have a Sort of Politicks, which are Spiritual and all Divine; a Government that is founded on Charity, the Public Good being the sole End of it: For the Interest of the Governours is no Way concerned in it (b).*

Besides a particular Defence of the distinguishing Privileges of these Churches in the following Attempt; there follows after this Preface a General Discourse Preliminary concerning the Nature, Grounds and Reasons, Antiquity and Advantages of Congregational Churches; which, I believe, will be judg'd by the Impartial and Disinterested a sufficient Vindication of them.

In the Close, and as an Appendix to the Book, I have taken Care to publish some Things that were never printed before among us, as well as some other Things that have already bin given to the Public, but are now scarcely to be found, concerning the Liberties of the New-English Churches, their catholic and comprehensive Principles, their declared Regard especially to the Life and Power of true Religion and their Duty and Interest to continue in their respectful and affectionate Attachment to these Things.

Some perhaps may judge, that, in attempting to write an Apology for the Liberties of our Churches, I have

(b) See *Fleury's Discourse on Ecclesiastical History*.

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have undertaken a Task, to which I am unequal: And probably it may be so in Reality and Truth: But yet I am inclin'd to express my self concerning my Performance, as TULLY concerning his Orator, *The Work may be great and arduous; but to him, that is inflamed with Love to it, there is not found any sufficient Difficulty in the Way to discourage him from it* (c).

However, if the Remarks and Arguments made and collected in the following Pages should be accounted slender and unsatisfactory; yet, if by Means of them some abler Person here or elsewhere shall be excited to *set the Liberties of our Christian Brethren in a fairer Light and to shew more Strength and Vigor in defending them*, I shall be so far from repenting of my Care and Trouble in preparing and publishing the following Essay, that I shall heartily rejoice in the good Success of it.

But, notwithstanding This, I must be so free as to declare, that in the ensuing Pages *I have endeavour'd faithfully to represent the Sense and Meaning of the first Planters of these Churches*: So that, with reference to what follows, I may write in the Style of VEGETIUS, *I am far from assuming any Thing of Authority to my self in the following Sheets: If I have collected the Sense of others right and well epitomiz'd their Thoughts* (d) *which are variously dispers'd and reduced them to a clear and natural Order, I shall think it sufficient*.

There is one Thing for which I expect to be somewhat blamed: And this is, that, in illustrating and confirming the Liberties of our Churches, I generally write in the Plural Number; whence some may conjecture, that it was at the Direction or by the Desire of the Churches here, that I write this Apology for them: But, wherever

(c) *Magnum Opus conamur & arduum; Sed nihil difficile Amanti puto. Cicero. ad Brut. Orator.*

(d) *Nihil mihi Authoritatis assumo: Sed quæ ab aliis dispersa velut in Ordinem epitomata conscribo. Veget. l. 1. c. 8.*

wherever I use such a Way of expressing my self, I desire always to be consider'd as *representing what I take to have bin the Thoughts of the Planters of these Churches, and so of the Churches themselves*: Nor would I, by any means be understood as directed or advised by the Churches to enter upon this Performance: For, if it were so, I should *lose the Comfort and Satisfaction, if not the Credit and Honour, of making my Free-Will Offering to their Service and Advantage.*

Nor is it at all improbable, that some may find Fault with my *frequent Quotations* from learned Authors and References to them: But, if the Province undertaken by me did not unavoidably lead me to make those Citations and References, I am very much mistaken: And, if it did, it is, I think, a sufficient Excuse for me.

As to the Passages selected from the *ancient Fathers*, I have only this to say, that they are generally taken from those, which are accounted the *best Editions*: And I believe my References to them are exact and punctual; tho' it is possible, that, in transcribing them into my *Common-Place Book* and this second Transcription of them, some accidental Mistake may have occur'd, which any good-natured Man can overlook and forgive.

I have one Favour to ask of those, that shall read this Book, which, I think, cannot in Reason be denied me: And this is, that, if any of them shall think fit to animadvert upon any Part or the whole of it, they would be so kind as to put their Names to what they publish: For otherwise they may not expect to have any Notice taken of them; nor may they expect any, if they do, unless they write in such a Manner as to require a suitable Answer from me.

I shall be very much disappointed, if, by the Publication of this small Volume, I do not gain the Displeasure and Anger, if not *mortal Enmity*, of many: But however I shall not be sorry for it, if I secure to my self, as I hope that I shall, *the perpetual Regard*
and

PREFACE

and Friendship (e) of all the true Lovers of Mankind and of our Christian Brethren in particular.

Since my writing this Book, there has a Pamphlet come to my Hands, which it is said was written by a Gentleman of the Law in England, the Title of which is, *An Examination of the Scheme of Church-Power, as laid down in the Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, &c.* As I was highly gratified in reading of this Pamphlet; so I cannot help reciting some Passages from it, which were peculiarly grateful to me; not doubting but that they will be singularly pleasing to my Countrymen, and not the less so for coming from the Pen of an eminent Lawyer. In Pag. 120th, 121st, 122d, 123d, he writes as follows, 'If the Gentlemen of Synodical Learning will permit us to carry our Enquiry on this Head so far back as to the Apostolick Age, we shall find that the Laity at that Time bore a Part in the most solemn Deliberations which concern'd the Interest or Government of the Church. The whole Number of Believers was consulted in the Choice of a fit Person to succeed to the Apostleship, which became vacant by the Apostacy and Death of Judas. Matthias was chosen, after solemn Prayer to God for His Direction, by the Suffrage or Ballot of the whole Church (f). The Multitude of Disciples was advis'd with touching the Institution of a new Order of Church Officers, the Order of Deacons (g). The Constitution it self, as well as the Election and Consecration (as it is now call'd) of the Seven, was the Act of the whole Multitude. The Apostles, Elders and Brethren, (or as it is otherwise express'd in the same Chapter (h), the whole Church, or all the Multitude) assembled at Jerusalem,

(e) *Neque me paritet mortales Inimicitias sempiternas Amicitias habere.* Cicero. Orat. pro C. Rabirio Posthumo.

(f) *Acts*, Chap. 1.

(g) *Acts*, Chap. 6.

(h) *Acts*, Chap. 15.

Jerusalem (i), to deliberate on the great Question, *How far the Gentile Converts were oblig'd to submit to the Law of Moses.* And after two of the Apostles of the Circumcision had deliver'd their Opinions; which they supported, *not by Apostolical Authority, but by strong Reasoning built on well known Facts, and Principles universally admitted:* And after *Paul and Barnabas*, Apostles of the Uncircumcision, had related to the Assembly a Series of Facts happening within their own Observation; from whence it might be reasonably concluded, that God approv'd the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, and would receive them into his Church without the Rite of Circumcision: After the Assembly, I say, had proceeded thus far in the Way of rational and free Debate; they came to a Resolution, which they communicated to the Churches concern'd, by Letter and Message, in *the Name of the whole Body.* Methinks, by the Way, his Lordship's Reasoning for appropriating the Care of Spiritual Affairs to the Clergy, loses a great deal of its Weight, when we reflect on the Behaviour of the Apostles in those Instances. As the Apostles had *really* that Superiority in Gifts and Abilities, which their Successors *bless themselves* withal, *They*, of all Men living, might have claim'd a separate and exclusive Right of Jurisdiction and Legislature, in Spiritual Matters. But the Apostles did not exclude the Brethren, the Body of the People, from their Counsels; nor dictated magisterially to them. They reason'd as with Men and Christians; and made no other Use of their superior Gifts and personal Knowledge of Facts, than to convince and persuade. And their Arguments, attended with the most evident Tokens *in themselves* of a disinterested Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Good of the Church, had a suitable Effect on their Hearers,

In

(i) Verse 12.

' In Conformity to the Practice of the Apostolick
 ' Age, the Laiety continued to have a Share in the
 ' Government of the Church, as *Members of a volun-*
 ' *tary Society, and interested in its Concerns*; till the
 ' Conversion of the *Roman Emperors* made Way for
 ' very considerable Changes in the Ecclesiastical Polity.
 ' Till that Time, all the Affairs of the Church were
 ' administer'd, at voluntary Assemblies of the Parties
 ' concern'd; which soon gain'd the Name of Councils
 ' or Synods; whereof the Laiety were always confi-
 ' der'd as Members. At these Meetings, Matters of
 ' Order and Discipline were transacted: And if any
 ' new Rules appear'd to be necessary for the Ends of
 ' Government, they were here agreed upon. *This was*
 ' *the Ecclesiastical Legislature of the primitive Church (l).*
 ' But when Christianity became the establish'd Religion
 ' of the Empire, and Church and State became one
 ' Body, consider'd only in different Views and under
 ' different Relations; the Ecclesiastical and Civil Laws
 ' of the Empire flow'd from one and the same Source,
 ' Imperial Prescripts. For tho' the Name and Shadow
 ' of the Senatorial and Tribunitial Powers remain'd,
 ' these Powers had been long extinguish'd: And the
 ' whole Legislative Power of the Empire was *really*
 ' vested in the Emperor. And by this Legislature
 ' were Ecclesiastical, as well as Civil Laws, *ordinarily*
 ' made; as every one sees, who hath but look'd into
 ' the Titles of the *Justinian* and *Theodosian* Codes. The
 ' Emperors did indeed, upon extraordinary Occasions,
 ' call Ecclesiastical Councils; sometimes of the Clergy
 ' and *Laiety*, as particularly at the first Council of *Nice*;
 ' but more frequently, I believe, of the Clergy alone (*m*).
 ' At these Councils the Emperors, in Person, or by
 ' their

(l) Constitution and Discipline of the Primitive Church.
 Edit. 1712. p. 143, 144. Father *Paul's* Rights of Sovereigas,
 p. 44. Treatise of Beneficiary Matters, Edit. 1680. p. 19.

(m) *Socrates*, Lib. I. c. 5.

* their Ministers, usually presided, and assented to the
 * Decrees *there* made; and in some Instances, did by
 * a separate Instrument, in Form of an Imperial Pre-
 * script, ratify the Decrees. The Presence and Con-
 * currence of the Emperor to the Acts of the Council,
 * gave them their binding Force, and incorporated
 * them into the Laws of the Empire. For the whole
 * Legislative Power being, as I observ'd, in the Empe-
 * ror, nothing could become Part of the Law, without
 * his Authority. This Principle of *the Necessity of an*
 * *Imperial Sanction to Synodical Decrees*, seems to be so
 * well understood in *Justinian's* Time, that he expressly
 * ordain'd, that the Acts of the Councils of *Nice, Con-*
 * *stantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon*, should have the
 * Force of Laws within the Empire, &c. And, after
 * this, the Author proceeds and shews, from the 124th
 * Page to the 137th Page of his Book, how, after the
 * universal Monarchy fell to Pieces about the Beginning
 * of the *fifth* Century, the *Northern People*, who erected
 * independent Kingdoms on the Ruines of it, after their
 * Conversion to Christianity, provided for their *Ecclesi-*
 * *astical*, in the same Manner as they did for their *Civil*,
 * *Polities*; and how this was gradually brought about
 * particularly in *England*.

But what can be said, if, notwithstanding such fair
 Accounts from disinterested and honest Men, the infa-
 tuated humane Race will *not believe the Truth, but*
take Pleasure in Unrighteousness and Oppression? Truly
 it must be accounted a melancholy Thing, and be for
 a *Lamentation* among all the sincere Lovers of Man-
 kind.

For my Part I can say with the learned Dr. HENRY
 MORE, at the Close of his useful *Exposition of the Seven*
Churches, *I am abundantly taught by Experience, that*
both the Finding out and the Receiving of Divine Truths
found out by others is a special Gift of GOD. And
 therefore I conclude this Preface with the Prayer,
 which the learned Abbot FLEURY makes at the End
 of

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of his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History, and I make it with all my Heart and Soul, GOD grant, that we may reap Advantage by being born in so knowing an Age; and that, if we are not able to recover the ancient Discipline of the Church, we may at least know how to esteem it, to reverence it, and to regret the Loss of it. AMEN!



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ERRATA.

THE kind Reader is desir'd to correct the following Errata.

- Page 9. Line 4. from Bottom, for *Spacious* read *Specious*.
P. 14. l. 19. for *Extents* read *Extent*.
P. 18. l. 2. in Margin, for *dictatur* read *dicatur*.
P. 20. l. 16. for *institued* read *instituted*.
P. 28. l. 13. for *Ambitions* read *Ambition*.
l. 2. from Bottom, for *Commands* read *Command*.
P. 29. l. 3. for *Churchts* read *Churches*.
l. 28. read *Christianismo*.
P. 32. l. 3. After CHRIST'S — read *Mind, we shall at the same Time declare for the Liberties of particular, &c.*
P. 42. l. 7. for *them* read *him*.
l. 14. for *have* read *leave*.
P. 156. l. 3. from Bottom, read *Cordolia*.
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At the end of the year 1858

the following persons were present

at the meeting of the committee

on the 1st of January 1858

the following persons were present

at the meeting of the committee

on the 1st of January 1858

the following persons were present

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A DISCOURSE

Concerning the Nature, Grounds and Reasons,
Antiquity and Advantages of

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES;

Wherein also

An Answer is endeavoured to such Objections
as have bin raised against them.



THE Churches of NEW ENGLAND are
nominally and professedly *Congregational*: They do not approve the Name
of *Independent* (a), and are abhorrent from
such Principles of *Independency* as would
keep them from giving an *Account* of
their Matters to their Brethren of neighbouring So-
cieties, regularly demanding it of them.

They apprehend, that a *Congregational Church* is, by
the Institution of our great LORD and King JESUS
CHRIST, a Part of the visible Church in its militant
State, consisting of a Company of holy Brethren, united
B together

(a) Platform of Church Discipline. Chap. II.

A Discourse concerning

together by mutual Engagements for the publick Worship of GOD, and their common Improvement and Edification in Knowledge and all Goodness.

Nor have they any Thing to object against that Article of the Church of ENGLAND, which speaks of *the visible Church of CHRIST* in such a Manner that they can heartily subscribe unto it. For they firmly believe it to be, as is there declared (b), *a Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of GOD is preached and the Sacraments be duly administred according to CHRIST's Ordinance in all those Things that of Necessity are requisite to the same*: So that the Earl of SHAFTSBURY was exceedingly in the Right, when in a famous Debate He said before the House of LORDS, that He found the nineteenth Article did define the Church directly as the Independents do: For really it does so. Only, if it had bin added in the Article, *wherein also the Discipline of CHRIST's Church is duely exercised*, they think that the Description would have bin more perfect.

As to the Churches, which answer to this Description, they are *Congregational*; and, concerning such Churches as These, these Churches are not ashamed to declare and maintain, that they take them to be *instituted by the great Head of the Church*: So that, if any should ask us the same Question which the Roman Catholicks frequently ask our Protestant Brethren abroad, *Where were your [Congregational] Churches before LUTHER?* We have the same Answer to give which our blessed SAVIOUR gave to an Enquiry of the Jews concerning HIMSELF, *Search the Scriptures: For they testify concerning Them.*

A Dean of Worcester, we know, has, not long since, in a Sermon, concerning Ecclesiastical Authority, declared in these Words, *He must never have look'd into Scripture who is capable of thinking it a perfect Rule of Worship. I mean, external Worship and Discipline*: But, adds Mr. Dean,

(b) XIXth Article of the Church of England.

Dean, be that will take in the Writings of the Primitive Church as a Supplement to Scripture in these Points, cannot be at a Loss to know what are the Powers of Church Governours or what the Obedience due unto them (x). But, as for us, we are not sensible of the Want, nor are we desirous, of any Supplements to the Scriptures in these Matters: Nor yet dare we indulge a Tho't of being wise above what is written in such Points as These: For we find sufficient Reason for falling into the Sentiments of the learned Mr. Abbot FLEURY, which are thus expressed in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History,— There was nothing wanting at that Time [h. e. the Time of Primitive Christianity] for the due Government of the Church: No! When the Apostles founded it, there was without Doubt nothing omitted in laying down Practical Rules as much for the Conduct of the whole Body, as the Manners of particular Persons: And these Rules were neither imperfect nor impracticable, but such as were absolutely necessary to bring Them to a Gospel Perfection, more or less, according to the different Measures of GOD's Grace. These Rules were not imperfect; since, as the Christian Religion was the Work of GOD, it had all Perfection at first. It is not like the Inventions of Men, which have their Rise, Progress and Fall. GOD acquires neither Knowledge nor Power by Degrees. All Things, says our SAVIOUR, that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you: And, speaking of the HOLY GHOST, He will lead you into all Truth: And, to shew that this does not only relate to the Tenets of Religion, He says further, Go, teach all Nations, teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you. Every Thing then was equally established at first, which could be of Use to Them in Practice, as well as in Faith.— And therefore we cannot approve of any Humane Supplements to the perfect Rule of Worship

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(x) P. 29 of said Sermon.

and Order, with which we are favored in the holy Scriptures.

We think indeed, that there are *some Circumstances relating to the Worship of GOD and the Government in these Churches*, which, agreeable to what is practised in other Societies, may be regulated by *Natural Light and Christian Prudence according to the general Rules of GOD's Word*, which ought for ever to have a particular Regard paid unto them.

But at the same Time our Churches judge, that they are *not left at any Uncertainty about the Essentials of that Policy*, which our Lord JESUS CHRIST hath settled and would have to be observed: For it appears to them, that there is a *Divine Institution for the following Things*; to wit, that there should be *public Assemblies* for the Worship of GOD and the Improvement of His People in Knowledge and Vertue, and that none should officiate in them but *such Officers as CHRIST has appointed*; that Christians should be *stated Members of one particular Church*, and that *particular Churches should have proper settled Pastors* in them who should live among them and instruct them by their Preaching and Example; that *Pastors and People by mutual Consent become related to one another*, and that, by virtue of these *Relations* which are of Divine Appointment as well as by their own Choice and Consent, they are *formed and constituted a Spiritual Society of CHRIST's Institution*; that none should be admitted into the Communion of such a Society but *such as profess the true Religion and appear in a Judgment of Charity to be holy Persons*; that all such as are allow'd the Privilege of Communion in such a Society should *relieve, comfort and assist one another in outward Respects*, but that they should *especially be helpful to one another in their best Interests*; and that, if any break in upon the *Laws of CHRIST and the Society* to which they are related, they are *accountable to the Society and censurable by it*; and, in fine, that all such particular Societies should live at Peace within themselves, and hold a friendly

friendly Correspondence and Christian Communion with other Churches for their mutual Support, Edification and Comfort.

This is the Policy which these Churches own; and this is *all the Form of Church Government* which they can find in the Scriptures to be *instituted* by their great Lawgiver and King: Nor can they imagine, that any can with Reason deny that such Churches as these are *true Churches of JESUS CHRIST.*

Nay, if those are *true Churches of CHRIST* in which the pure Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel are taught and inculcated, and the Sacraments of the new Covenant are *duely administred* according to the Institution of our great SAVIOUR, and a *sacred Regard* is always had to *whatsoever* our LORD has commanded; these Churches may then esteem themselves to be *true Churches of CHRIST* and even account themselves *the truest Churches* according to our SAVIOUR's Institution: For, in their conforming to that Institution with inviolable Fidelity, they shine with superior Glory to others.

The Principles, upon which these Churches are founded, are such, that they need not be afraid or ashamed of owning them before the whole World: For, according to the Account of the Bishop of Condom concerning our Congregational Brethren abroad, these Churches believe, that *every Christian ought to follow the Light of his own Mind, the Conviction of his own Conscience, nor is obliged to submit his Judgment to the Authority of any Person or any Ecclesiastical Assembly.* 'Tis true they are for paying a most profound Deference to the Word of God; nor do they refuse to embrace the Decisions of Councils and Synods, if upon a due and impartial Examination they appear to be reasonable and Scriptural: But the Thing, which these Churches utterly disclaim and refuse to do, is to *submit their Judgment to that of any Assembly* however considerable: For they are persuaded, that the most considerable Societies of Men are liable to Mistakes and Errors; and therefore they submit to the
Word

Word of GOD only, the Authority of which is undisputed and infallible with them.

And, as these Churches assert and claim *the Right of private Judgment* as Men, as Christians, and as Protestants; they also declare for and maintain *the Rights of particular Churches*: For they conceive, that every *Christian Society or Church* ought not to have any *Dependence in Ecclesiastical Matters*, nor are obliged to acknowledge the Authority of Councils or Synods for their Direction and Government, but ought to be governed within itself and by its own Laws. They acknowledge indeed, that they ought to exercise their proper Jurisdiction and Government within themselves *with Dependence upon our blessed SAVIOUR*, together with *HIS HOLY SPIRIT* and unerring Oracles: But they think themselves by Divine Right excused from Subjection to any other Church, tho' it be a Mother one, and that they may exercise an independent Jurisdiction within themselves. And the Reason why these Churches give into such Sentiments is sufficient: For we cannot suppose, that Churches are to be propagated as worldly Dominions; as tho' Original Churches, which send forth their Colonies, must maintain Dominion and perpetual Power over such as came from them: For, after this Rate, the Churches of Geneva, Heidelberg and the united Provinces must claim a Dominion and Jurisdiction over the other Protestant Churches: But we conceive of our Churches, as of adult Sons, who are not at the Disposal of their Ancestors, but have a Right to govern themselves and exercise their Power with respect to their own Possessions; or as of Branches taken from true Olive Trees, which, being planted and watered, grow and encrease, without any Manner of Dependence upon the Trees from which they were taken, for Preservation, Support and Fructifying Vertue (d).

These Principles are the firm and unmoveable Foundations

(d) Ex Voet. Desperat. Caus. Papatus. L. III. Sec. III. Cap. IV.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

editions of these and all Congregational Churches: And, wherever these Principles prevail, as methinks they should prevail every where among rational and confederate Christians; there the *Congregational Form of Church-Government* must be acknowledged and preferred before any other.

But, while these Churches esteem this their Form of Government, inasmuch as it is established upon such unshaken Principles; they cannot but entertain an indifferent, not to say a mean, Opinion of *National Churches* in various Kingdoms and Countries, *with an Uniformity of Doctrine and of Discipline*, which are a distinct Government from the Civil, their Offices and their Jurisdiction being different: For they apprehend, that *such Churches have introduced Ecclesiastical Tyranny and Antichrist into the World*; and they are almost ready to declare with Dr. Du MOULIN, that *(e) a National Church has bin, is and will be the Cause, that there will never be a Church in the World in its true Purity, unless Almighty God reserves some among the Congregational Churches*: For in such an Establishment it is *not Truth nor Goodness* that influences and governs; but it is the *greatest Number together with worldly Power and Interest*, that rules and bears down all before it: So that it is not from a blind, partial and unreasonable Regard for the *Congregational Way*, that these Churches do not approve of *National Establishments*; but from a clear Apprehension of the *Mischiefs arising from such National Establishments*.

Nay such is the Value which these Churches have for the *Congregational Way*, that they even prefer it to all other Establishments, whether *Popish or Reformed*, whether *Episcopal or Presbyterian*, as having much the Advantage of them: For those Establishments cannot subsist, *only by the Subordination of one Judicatory to another*: And how can this subsist, unless the *Civil Magistrate approve*

(e) Dr. Lewis Du Moulin concerning the Government of the Independents. p. 23.

DISCOURSE CONCERNING

approve or tolerate it? But now the *Congregational Way* needs not the Aid of the secular Powers, but stands good without it; flourishing in persecuting Kingdoms, and under the most tyrannical, arbitrary and cruel of Princes.

Blessed be GOD this Government have sufficiently declared their Approbation of the *Congregational Way*: But if GOD our SAVIOUR, as a just Punishment for our Unfruitfulness and Ingratitude, should frown upon us by sending us such Rulers as are *Enemies to the Constitution of these Churches*; we may reasonably hope, that they will not deprive us of the due, the confessedly due, *Liberty of Mankind*, to wit, the Liberty of chusing our Religion and of joining with one Church rather than another.

And, while we have such Sentiments concerning the *Congregational Way*, we cannot but grow confirmed in these Sentiments upon finding that several learned Protestants, who are not attached unto it, are even compell'd by the Force of Truth to declare in Favour of it. Not to mention LUTHER'S Assertion, that *there may be weighty Reasons for separating from Churches which are not erroneous in their Doctrine* (f): Nor yet to insist upon what Dr. STILLINGFLEET has observed, to wit, *that a Christian is bound to adhere to that Church that retaineth most of the Evangelical Purity* (g): I shall only quote the learned Dr. JACKSON, who declares *the just and necessary Reasons for which Men, whether few or many, may and ought to separate from any visible Church*: These are (h), *In the first Place, because they are urged or constrained to profess or believe some Points of Doctrine or adventure upon some Practices which are contrary to the Rule of Faith, or Law of GOD, &c. And, secondly, In Case they are utterly deprived of Freedom of Conscience in professing what they*

(f) *Etiam si prater ea nihil esset in Doctrina pontificia; justas tamen fuisse Causas cur ab Ecclesia Romana nos Sejungeremus.* Luther. in Cap. IV. Genes.

(g) *Stillingfleet's Irenic.* p. 109.

(h) *Dr. Jackson of the Church.* Chap. XIV. ad Fin.

they inwardly believe or be bereft of some other Means either altogether necessary or most expedient to Salvation, both which may be had in some other visible Church. In which Passages we have a celebrated Divine of the Church of ENGLAND declaring the Reasons of the Conduct of these Churches as expressly as they could themselves and justifying our Choice of the *Congregational Way*, as plainly as if he had by Name recommended it. I said, that I should only quote this learned Doctor; and indeed I need not cite any other: Tho' I could with Ease produce almost every Protestant Writer of Note, who has treated of the Church, as giving into those Sentiments which have determined these Churches to profess and practise the *Congregational Way* and prefer it before any other.

But we do not lay any great Stress upon the Testimonies of Men as weak and fallible as ourselves: These Churches neither seek nor want the Recommendations of others: We reckon it our distinguishing Honour, that of all the Reformed Churches, we are *the most distant from the Church of ROME*, and *the most conform'd to the Churches in the Days of the Apostles and of Primitive Christianity*.

It is well known, that these Churches have the most inveterate Antipathy to the *Dominion of the Clergy*: And the Reason of this our Antipathy is, because we conceive that the *Mystery of Iniquity* was accomplished by the Tyranny of the Clergy and of the Bishop of Rome (i) under the Form and spacious Pretext of *Ecclesiastical Power and Catholic Religion* (k): And therefore, as in the *Congregational Way* the *Empire of the Clergy* is further forsaken than in any other Form of Church Government,

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(i) Si Episcopus dici potest Basiliscus ille Ecclesia Dei & Pætri Orbis Terrarum; scil. Episcopus Romanus.

Martin-Lutheri Præfat. præfix. Epist. quibusd. J. Hufi, impress. Witteberg. 1537.

(k) Roma Sedes Petri, quæ Pastoralis Honoris. Pætri Caput Mundi, quicquid non possides. Armis, Religionis tenes.

we conclude to our own Comfort and Satisfaction that we are at the most remote Distance from the *Mother of Abominations*.

And we are free to appeal to the World of Mankind, as that these Churches are at the greatest Distance from the Church of Rome, that they also come nearest to those in the Days of the Apostles and are most conformable to Primitive Institution: And we defy any Person whatever to produce and mention any Church, which is spoken of in the more ancient Writers for two hundred Years, but what was a Congregational Church.

The famous CALDERWOOD expressly asserts, that the Word Church in the Scripture is never used to signify the Faithful or Christians of a Nation, Province or Diocese, as it is now used when we say the Church of France, of England or of Scotland: This Way of Speaking, says he, is not dictated by the Holy SPIRIT in the Scriptures (l). And these Churches are entirely satisfied, that in the New-Testament where several Assemblies formed for public Worship are mentioned, they are called Churches, nor are they ever once called a Church in the singular. Nay we are persuaded, that a Church cannot once be found, only where the Church universal which comprizes all particular ones is mentioned: So that we are not shy to declare with the great HUGO GROTIUS, whose Authority with many of our Brethren on the Episcopal Side is incontestable, tho' not with us, that as of Old there were many Synagogues in one great City, so there were also several Churches or Meetings of Christians, and that every Church had its Bishop (m).

If Instances and Examples of multiplied Churches and Bishops be desired, there are enow at Hand to be produced: I might mention it, that in AUSTIN'S Time there were Nine Hundred Bishops in Africa (n), tho' there

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(l) *Non est ista Phrasis dictata a Spiritu sancto in Scripturis. Didoclauii. Altar. Damascen. p. 281.*

(m) Grotius in 1 Tim. v. 17.

(n) August. Tom. VII. De Gestis cum Emerit.

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were not half so many Cities, and many of the Cities in his Time were Pagans: I might observe, that in *Ireland* *St. Patrick* Founded Three Hundred and Sixty-five Churches and as many Bishops(o); whereas to be sure there never was that Number of Cities in it: I might recite the Testimony of *Baronius*, that, from the Year 1145, there were a Thousand Bishops in Armenia; adding the Declaration of the Emperor *Justinian*, that in his Time there were but Twenty Cities in *Armenia*(p); and their Number afterwards decreased. I might repeat what the peevish old *Epiphanius* has declared, to wit, that *Alexandria* never had two Bishops, as all other Churches had had. I might offer it as certain, that at *Antioch* there were two Bishops together, *Paulinus* and *Eustathius*; And it may be depended on, that at the Conference at *Carthage* with the *Donatists*, the Orthodox offered, that if the *Donatists* were overcome, their Bishops upon disowning their Error should continue in their Office; and if the People could not bear two Bishops in one Church, a Third was to be chosen (q).

But, inasmuch as these Examples and others of the same Kind which I might bring, may not have the Stamp of Early Antiquity upon them, and so may not be much regarded, I shall therefore look further back, and say what we have found in the more early Times of the Christian Church.

Now we are ready to speak concerning those early Ages, in the Style of Father *Paul* (r), as those happy Times, when the Name of the Church was common to the Congregation of the Faithful, unto whom did belong the Use and Propriety of the Goods which are called Ecclesiastical. And it appears to us, that no ancient Writers for the

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(o) Sic scribit *Nimius* & *Jacobus Armachan* in his Religion of the Irish.

(p) *Petravon. & Novell. 13. C. I.*

(q) *Breviculum Collationum cum Donatist.*

(r) *History of the Council of Trent. p. 259.*

Space of Two Hundred Years mention any other Churches but Congregational ones: And this is what the profoundly learned JOSEPH MEDE, in his Proof for Churches in the Second Century, has clearly and abundantly evidenced: For he hath shewn, that no Bishop had then more than one Altar, and that one Bishop and one Altar were Correlatives. Nor can we help thinking, that the Report of the Magdeburgensian Centuriators is well founded, to wit, that the Churches of the third Century were Congregational and enjoyed the same Government, almost according to the Manner of the preceeding Age, tho' somewhat increased by Pride and Ambition (f). And we judge THORNBTOK to be in the Right, when he acknowledges Bishops to be so plentiful in Africa [in the Primitive Times] that every good Village must have bin the Seat of an Episcopal Church (t): For SOZOMEN declares before him, that Villages had their Bishops (u). And the Abbot FLEURY, in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History, has bin so ingenuous as to own, that in those Times the Dioceses were so small that one Man alone might be sufficient and know all his Flock himself.

We are ready to acknowledge indeed, that CYPRIAN about the Two Hundred and Fortieth Year after CHRIST uses the Term Church for a Collection of many particular Churches (w). But otherwise we cannot recollect, any more than the excellent Author of *An Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church*, that it is used in this Sense by that Father in any of his Writings or by the rest of the Fathers: For it is manifest unto us, as he that hath Eyes may see and he that runs may read, that whenever they speak of any Christians in any Province or Kingdom they always speak in the Plural, never once in the Singular of the Church in such a Kingdom.

(f) in Centur. III. Cap. 7

(t) Thornbtok's Right of the Churches Review. p. 153.

(u) Sozomen. L. VII. Cap. 19.

(w) Cyprian in Epist. 71. 6. 4. p. 214.

(x) Dr. Burnet's History of the Reformation. p. 374.

dom (x). Nay we find by the same invaluable Author, that EUSEBIUS about the Year Three Hundred and Twenty sixth of our LORD styles the Laity the Church, in Opposition to the Clergy (y).

But there is no Necessity of labouring in Defence of Congregational Churches, which are so firmly established from the Scripture and most early Antiquity, that it would argue a strong Prejudice in favour of some particular new and unscriptural Establishment to be against them.

As for these Churches, they are satisfied with the Congregational Way, and judge the Proofs of Congregational Churches from Scripture and the purest Antiquity to be strong and unanswerable. But however, if we should be willing out of Complaisance to the Disciples of ERASTUS to allow, that neither our SAVIOUR has instituted nor Primitive Antiquity favoured any particular Form of Church-Government, but that every State and Kingdom may regulate the Affairs of Churches and form a Polity for them, just as shall appear to them to be fit and convenient; still we cannot but think it entirely reasonable, notwithstanding such a large Concession, that there should be Congregational Churches, and that these Churches should in a good Measure have the Government of themselves: For it is suitable to the Nature of Things, the Authority of the Civil Magistrate and the Obligations of the Pastoral Care, that every Church should act within herself as an entire and independent Body (z). And indeed, as particular or Congregational Churches support and protect the whole Concerns of Religion, they have an undoubted natural Right to be consulted and act within themselves; nor ought they to be restrained by the Civil Magistrate or Lordly Bishops or Metropolitans or Synods.

There are, we are sensible, various plausible Pleas and Arguments against the Right of particular Churches

(x) Sir Peter King's Constitution of the Primitive Church, p. 6.

(y) Ejsld. Author. pag. 10.

(z) Dr. Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 374.

to act within and govern themselves. Some insist upon it, that the Apostles had Power over particular Churches and that their Successors therefore should have Power over them also. Others plead, that particular Churches should be absolutely subject to their own Elders or to other Churches. And many others argue, that particular Churches should be dependant on Councils and other Judicatories, and that they ought to be determined by them, as the Jewish Synagogues were by the Sanhedrim at JERUSALEM. These are the chief Arguments that are brought against the Right of particular Churches to act within themselves and govern themselves: And these shall be distinctly proposed, examined and refuted.

As to the Argument, which is bro't by many against the Congregational Form of Government, from the Power of the Apostles over particular Churches, by which it is concluded that their Successors should have Power over them also; This Argument will easily be enervated by considering the Extents and Limits of the Apostolical Power.

Now it must be acknowledged, that the Apostolical Power reached to every Church as much as to any one. For, as they were empowered to disciple all Nations and baptize through the whole World, they were also directed to feed the Sheep and Lambs of CHRIST's Fold, let it be said, every where; and I am ready to grant, that this Feeding them implies in it all the Acts of Pastoral Government.

But, if all this be allowed; yet this will be no good Reason why any pretended Successors to the Apostles should have such an extensive Power. How indeed should they come by it? For it does not yet appear that our SAVIOUR gave, and His Apostles transmitted it unto them: It follows therefore, that, altho' the Apostles might have such a wide Power and extensive Influence, their Power and Influence ended with them, and no others may claim it to themselves and act in virtue of it.

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And besides I am ready to acknowledge the Power of the Apostles to be extended not only to all Churches, but also to the Performance of the various particular Offices in the several Churches: So that, as Pastors, as Teachers, as Rulers and as Deacons, they might teach and exhort, govern, receive and distribute the Offerings of the Church. Nay I am willing to grant for the present, that any one Apostle or Evangelist might baptize or censure any Offender, just as if the whole Church were present and concurr'd in those Actions.

But what then? Will it follow, because PHILIP baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch without any Church, and the Apostle PAUL excommunicated ALEXANDER without any, that therefore this was their constant Practice? No surely: For, when the Apostle PAUL could obtain the Consent of the Church and Presbytery in the Exercise of any Act or Ecclesiastical Power, he readily took it, as in the Ordination of Timothy and the Excommunication of the Incestuous Corinthian.

It may therefore be fairly concluded, that the Apostles, when they were distant from all Churches, put forth their Power in the Administration of any Church-Acts, and the Power which they had received of CHRIST was sufficient to countenance and justify them in so doing; but that in Churches, which were regularly form'd and organical, they did not exert any such Power as was inconsistent with the Privileges of the People. Nay they were so far from it, that we have Reason to think, that they did not baptize or ordain or excommunicate without the Consent of the People. Were not all Things belonging to the Churches, whether PAUL or APOLLOS or CEPHAS? Did not these derive their Power of acting in them from Them under CHRIST? And were not the Apostles given to the Churches? Truly the Scriptures affirm so, nor ever say that the Churches were given to the Apostles or any other Rulers. And, as for the Instances which have bin produced, from which the Plenitude of the Apostolical Power is sometimes argued; it must first of all

all be proved, that *there were Churches formed and gathered in the Places where they administred the Ordinances of CHRIST and the Discipline of His Appointment*, before there can be any Thing argued from those Instances: For, if there were no formed Churches, and it has not yet bin proved that there were in those Places; it is not at all to be wondred at, if the Apostles did not consult the Churches, but acted alone: They could do no otherwise.

But, even allowing that the Apostles in the Fulness of their Apostolical Power did these and such like Acts when and where they pleased, without any Regard to the People; still what is all this to such as pretend themselves to be Successors of the Apostles? For have they any such Power and Authority? Or, ought they to have any such? Or, if any such Pretenders are in Possession of it, how came they by it? — Surely these are the Men, that enter not by the Door into the Sheepfold, but they climb up some other Way: They are therefore to be considered by Mankind as daring Thieves and Robbers of them in their best Interests.

There are others who argue, that particular Churches should be absolutely subject to their own Elders or to other Churches. But to this the Answer is easy, to wit, that particular Churches have an undoubted Liberty to act within themselves. Now will you say, that they derived this Liberty either from their own Elders or from Neighbouring Christian Societies? How can you say from the former, when it was in the Power of the Churches to chuse their Elders and they exercised their Liberty in the Choice of them? So that the Churches could not derive their Power and Liberty from their Elders; because, before they had their Elders, they were in the rightful Possession of this Power and Liberty, and saw meet to exercise it.

And how can it be said, that other particular Churches conferred on them this Power and Liberty? For all particular Churches have equal Power and Liberty within them.

themselves. There was a Church at Genoa, which was but a little Village, a small Port to Genoa, and yet that small Church was not subject to the Church of Genoa. Nor indeed ought any one particular Church to be subject or subordinate to another, however numerous, great and eminent: For there is not a Title in the Scripture to justify such a Subordination of Churches.

Not yet is This the declared Opinion of such only as profess and practise the Congregational Way, but I find that others, who conform to a different Way, have received and expressed the very same Opinion. Thus, for Instance, the vastly learned GILBERT VOET, in Answer to this Question, *Whether Ministers alone, considered by themselves or as in a Body, that is, as a meeting of a Synod of Ministers; and whether constant Classes of the Delegates of Churches whether of Ministers alone or other Elders along with them are the first Subject of Ecclesiastical Power, so that from them this Power is derived to particular Churches and their Consistories?* He writes in this Manner, No! I am so far from thinking, that Churches owe their Rise to such Assemblies as their first constituent Principles, that all the Power of the Churches is communicated from them and must finally be resolved into them, and that therefore as to their Rise and continuing to act, they are dependant on such Assemblies: I am so far from thinking this, that I chuse rather to determine the contrary. — For this I offer no other Reason but the following, that every particular Church is by itself, and may be called, a Church, and consequently is the first and proper Subject of Ecclesiastical Power: As much as every Man is the Subject of the Faculty of Understanding (a). Thus that eminent Dutch Divine. And if

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(a) Tantum abest ut Ecclesias ab illis Causis oriatur, tanquam primis Principiis constituens, omnemque earum Potestatem inde communicari & in Delegatos illos ultimo resolvi, atque addo necessario ab eis in Ortu & actu suo dependere putem, ut potius contrarium statuum. Sententiam hanc meam explicando, Part. 2, ubi de Classibus & Synodis. Rationes nullas addo, pra-

any should enquire, well! Granting, that particular Churches may be the first Subject of Ecclesiastical Power; yet may not a Sanhedrim or Synod or a Classis or the Civil Magistrate take away their Power from them and transfer it to themselves? To this I shall only render at present the Answer which is given by the great Divine just mentioned. Now his Answer is in the Negative: For says He, not to repeat the Reasons which may be bro't from their Divine and Natural Right; I shall only cite those two Elements of Right, that Justice is the constant and perpetual Inclination or Will of giving to every one his own, and that they who have a Right ought not to be deprived of it. Now this Right, to wit, of particular Churches, is divinely conferred and possessed by Divine Right: If therefore any, regardless of the Fear of GOD, should go about to deprive them of it, they may expect the Fulfilment of that Threatning, in Isa. XXXIII. 1. *Wo to you that spoil and deal treacherously: Thou shalt be spoiled, and They shall deal treacherously with you; and that, in 1 Thes. IV. 6. None should go beyond and oppress or over-reach or defraud their Brethren in any Matter; because the LORD is the Avenger of all such (b).*

But then, what shall we say to our Presbyterian Brethren, who argue that particular Churches should be dependant on Councils and other Judicatories and ought to be determined by them, just as the Jewish Synagogues by the greater Sanhedrim at Jerusalem?

We may say and stand to it, that particular Churches are not beholden to Councils, Synods or any other Judicatories for their Liberty. 'Tis true the Church of ANTIOCH borrowed Light from the Synod at JERUSALEM, and

præter istam, quod Ecclesia qualibet particularis per se sit & dictatur Ecclesia, & consequenter Primum ac Proprium Subjectum sit Potestatis Ecclesiastica: Non minus quam Homo quilibet est Subjectum Facultatis intelligendi. Voet. Polit. Ecclesiast. Part. I. Lib. I. Tract. II. Cap. I.

(b) *Voet. Par. II. Lib. I. Tract. I. Cap. II.*

and by the Decrees of that Synod were *established in Truth and Peace*: But it cannot be made to appear, that they derived any Liberty at all from them. No! They had undoubtedly the Power and Liberty of acting within themselves. They might indeed in an emergent Case send to JERUSALEM for Advice and Assistance: But this sending there will neither prove any Jurisdiction in the JERUSALEM Churches over the Church of ANTIOCH, nor any Want of Jurisdiction in the Church of ANTIOCH. Any Number of Men or any Council or Synod of Churches may doctrinally propose Rules as necessary to be observed; but yet they may not claim any Authority in a Disciplinary Way to punish those that will not conform to those Rules: And therefore, altho' a Power of explaining and confirming Doctrines according to the Scriptures might be allowed to be in a Council or Synod, this will not prove that they have any further Authority in a Disciplinary Way to enforce their Decrees on particular Churches: Nor indeed has the Word of GOD granted to any Councils or Synods or other Judicatories any such Jurisdiction over particular Churches.

Our Presbyterian Brethren will probably say here, *What! Shall particular Churches be dependant upon no Judicatories? Why may they not depend on Councils and Synods and other Judicatories? The Jewish Synagogues depended on the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem: And why should not Christian Synagogues acknowledge the Jurisdiction of neighbouring Presbyteries, of provincial Synods, of national Conventions and General Assemblies?*

I answer, that, supposing the Synagogues or particular Congregations in Israel did depend upon a superior Judiciary, it will not therefore follow that particular Christian Congregations should do so too: And the Reason is very plain and obvious, nor is it easy to enervate it, namely, because particular Synagogues or Congregations then were not complete Churches, as Christian particular Churches now are: For the People could not have the ordinary and continual Worship and Ordinances of GOD in

them; but they were obliged to go up to Jerusalem that so they might attend and enjoy them: Nay they were strictly commanded not to keep the Passover nor to bring any Sacrifices and Offerings onely at Jerusalem, the Place which God had chosen for the special Seat of His Presence: But now where is our Jerusalem? We know of none but that which is above, the Mother of us all.

And, as for Christian Churches, They are entirely different Things from the Jewish Synagogues: For all the ordinary Worship and all the special Ordinances of God our SAVIOUR may now be enjoyed in particular Churches: And this shews them to be perfect and entire within themselves: And in Truth there is nothing to be found in all the New Testament of any greater Church instituted upon which lesser Churches should depend: Nor are any Ordinances or Methods of Worship prescribed in it, but what may be observed in every particular Congregation.

Besides; It is to be considered, that at Jerusalem there was a supreme Judicatory, which had an uncontrollable Power and from the Determinations of which there was no Appeal: So that this was the dernier-Resort upon Earth: Let it be so: But in the New Testament we read of no such supreme Judicatory: And therefore, if we once depart from a particular Church for Jurisdiction, we shall be wise beyond what is written and run wild in our Imaginations. All Jurisdiction therefore should be confined to particular Churches, in whose Hands our SAVIOUR hath left it: Nor may any particular Churches by any Act of their own or thro' their own Negligence deprive themselves of this Power: For, as by so doing they would betray a great Trust committed to them, so they would renounce their Duty also by it: For, unless they have and keep this Jurisdiction within themselves, they cannot faithfully discharge various Duties, which are required of them by CHRIST JESUS their Lawgiver.

These

These Churches indeed acknowledge a *Consociation of Churches* for mutual Light and Assistance; and, as they conceive, that such Churches as will not act in Conjunction with others, but confine their Duty within the narrow Limits of their own Assemblies, *cut themselves off from the external Communion of the Catholic Church*; they judge also that it will not be safe or prudent for any Christian to commit his Soul to the Direction and Conduct of *such an independent Church*. But, while these Churches acknowledge a *Consociation* among them, they cannot think that this *Consociation* forms and constitutes a *new Sort of Church*, or a *Church of Churches* as the famous Mr. COTTON once spoke, tho' he afterwards spake and thought otherwise: Nor do our Churches allow, that *such a Consociation may take away or lessen the Power and Liberty of particular Churches*: For they think, that, *without any such Consociation or Correspondence of Churches, every particular Church is essentially and integrally a true Church(c)*: And it is their declared Apprehension and Judgment, that *the true Use of such a Consociation is to direct and guide particular Churches*, as they may have Occasion for Light and Help: Nor have they any Thing to object against frequent Meeting in *Councils or Synods*, to learn the Spiritual State of the Churches within the *Consociation*, and to give Advice for the Amendment of what may be amiss in one or another of the said Churches, for preserving Worship in its Purity and Spirituality, for maintaining a godly Discipline and promoting the Power and Evidences of true Religion: Provided, that the Churches, convening in such Councils or Synods, are careful not to injure themselves, but see to it that the Liberties of the particular Churches be not invaded by any Determinations and Acts that may be passed in them.

This

This was the Opinion of the Fathers of *New England*, and indeed of *all the ancient Non-Conformists* almost in *England*: So one of them in the Name of the Rest has observed; and Dr. DOWNHAM, in a Sermon at *Lambeth*, page 5th. says, *They, that is, the Non-Conformists, say, that every Parish hath sufficient Authority within it self immediately derived from CHRIST for the Government of itself in all Causes Ecclesiastical.*

But some sanguine People cannot be content with such a Consociation as has bin mentioned: No! They want something further: They must have their *Judicatories*, they will have their *decisive Synods* or *Convocations*, or else they will presently be for condemning the *Gospel as more defective than the Law*: Nay it is well, if they do not plead for *external Force* and for Officers and Powers derived from humane Laws, concerning which the Scripture is utterly silent.

If such Persons as these could but be perswaded for a Moment to look off from their beloved secular Interest, and to hear what we have to say upon this Head, probably they might emerge into better Sentiments. Come then, all such of you as have hitherto pleaded for *Weapons which are not christian and spiritual, but carnal and worldly, tho' mighty thro' Satan for the pulling down* of all such as conscientiously dislike and oppose your vain unscriptural Imaginations; Come, I say, and let us reason a little with Calmness upon the Head before us. You say then, that you would have a *supreme Judicatory for the final Issuing of Causes*, with a decisive ungainfayable Power for that Purpose: Very well. To this it may be answered, *why may not a particular Church be this Judicatory?* For indeed the new Testament has not appointed any other. Whereas, according to your Opinion, we shall be at a Loss forever *where to find the Judicatory*, which you want and for which you so zealously plead: For, from a *Congregation and Classis*, you must go to a *Provincial Synod*: And where next? Then to a *National Synod*: And what will you

do then? Afterwards you must go to a *general acumenical Council*; by which Means your Cause will be unreasonably protracted, nor in all Probability ever come to a final Decision.

You will perhaps think it enow to reply, that, *unless there be stated Judicatories for the hearing of Causes*, we shall be continually at Uncertainties and never know in our Difficulties what shall be done: But it is a sufficient Answer to this to say, that *particular Churches are such standing Judicatories*, not of humane Appointment but of Divine, which always are or should be ready to hear and to give Judgment in Cases that properly come before them: Whereas *Synods and other Judicatories*, if they had the *Supreme Power* lodged in their Hands, would *not always be ready* to consider nor yet to determine, but would be both *long in meeting and tedious in determining the Affairs* which come before them.

And, in fine, I would add, in Answer to any other Objection that may remain or may possibly be raised or drawn from the *Advantage of such a Supreme Judicatory as is supposed to have sat at Jerusalem*: First of all, That it is very probable, that such a *Sanhedrim*, as the Friends of it suppose to be derived down from Moses in an uninterrupted Succession to the Fourth Century after JESUS CHRIST, tho' some say not so late, *is a mere Rabbinical Chimera that never had any real Existence*; For the Scriptures never any where expressly mention it: Nor yet does JOSEPHUS or PHILO or any other well acquainted with the Jewish Government ever speak of it in such a Manner as is usual on these Occasions: There are indeed some Passages in the Gospels, which give us Reason to think that there was a *Sanhedrim* towards the *latter End of the Jewish State*: But the profound Silence of the *Times foregoing* is a strong Argument for not admitting any such Thing before the *Babylonish Captivity*: So that the *Proofs* of such a Supreme Judicatory to be Divinely instituted and as such submissively regarded may well be questioned by us; and therefore
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the Argument, drawn from the same, may as to us be considered as inconclusive and frivolous.

But, if it should be granted you, that there was such a Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, in every Respect according to your Imagination; yet we may safely affirm, that, in those particular Churches instituted by our SAVIOUR and conforming to His Directions, we have much the Advantage of the Jews in that Judicatory: For now, praised be GOD our SAVIOUR, Churches, wherein the Supreme Power upon Earth is lodged, are many: So that Christians may have the Advantage of that Power with considerable Ease and Convenience: It would therefore be very strange, if they were not duely apprehensive of the glorious Privilege enjoyed by them, and thankful to GOD their SAVIOUR for the Enjoyment of it.

Thus I have in a general Way pleaded for the Liberty of these Churches and shewed that they are not subject to any Judicatories nor ought to be subject to any: And, upon the whole, I am free to declare, that, supposing ever so many Convocations or Synods or even General Councils were called, they would have no Jurisdiction at all over these or any other particular or Congregational Churches: For the great Head of the Church never gave them any such Jurisdiction, nor is it in their Power to prove that they have derived any such Jurisdiction from HIM: Even that worthy Presbyterian Mr. RUTHERFURD himself professes, that he 'cannot see what Power of Jurisdiction to censure Scandals can be in a General Council', and he adds, 'there may be some merely Doctrinal Power if such a Council could be had, and that is all' (d). Surely then no lesser Judicatories can boast of any more Power: So that, after all, the Power of Jurisdiction must be placed where it properly belongs, to wit, in particular Churches of Divine Institution, where our SAVIOUR and LORD has placed it. For, as Dr. FULK observes in his Answer to the

Rhemists,

(d) *Rutherford's due Right of Presbyteries.* p. 482.

Rhemists, Chap. III. p. 381. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, whatever they are, are given to the whole Church, as all the ancient Doctors agreeable to the Scriptures do confess.

These particular Churches we judge to be the first proper Subject of all Ecclesiastical Offices, Gifts and Powers according to CHRIST's Institution and the Primitive Pattern: For, when the Apostles had founded many Churches in small Provinces and appointed ordinary Officers in them to administer CHRIST's Ordinances to all the Church; we find, that these Churches respectively met together in the same Place to impart the various Spiritual Gifts with which they were furnished and to discharge the Duties required of them: Nor can any Thing be more plain than this, that the various Gifts imparted to one particular Church and another by the HOLY SPIRIT, and the various Offices sustained in them were to profit withal, as the Apostle speaks, or for the Good of the Hive, as his Greek signifies: And it must be confessed, for it is as clear as the Light, that the several Duties enjoined upon particular Churches in the Apostolical Writings are such both in their Nature and the Manner of complying with them that they cannot be faithfully attended and observed but in particular Christian Societies or Churches: So that we may well form this Conclusion, that it is the common Privilege of all other particular Churches to have various Gifts imparted, to have these Gifts exercised, to have Offices disposed of, and Christian Duties performed for them.

But, having thus said, that according to CHRIST's Institution and the Primitive Pattern we judge particular Churches to be the first Proper Subject of all Ecclesiastical Offices, Gifts and Powers; I cannot but think it proper to introduce a Passage of the eminent Mr. CLAUDE, who thought it the best Way of maintaining the Reformation, in his Defence of it, to espouse these Sentiments and express them, as follows;

“AUSTIN

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"AUSTIN proved to the *Donatists*, that their Prin-
 "ciple was false; and it is worth the while to observe
 "the Method which he took to convince them of the
 "Fallacy of their Opinions. — He had Recourse to
 "the *Body of the Church*, and said, that the Sacraments
 "were not the Sacraments of the Bishops or Pastors;
 "that the Power of the Keys did not belong to them, nor
 "the Power of Binding and Loosing, nor the other
 "Acts of the Ministry or Episcopal Office; but that
 "all these Things did belong to the Church: So that it is
 "the Church that baptizeth, when the Bishops or
 "Pastors baptize; it is the Church that bindeth, when
 "the Pastors bind, it is She that looseth, when the
 "Pastors loose: And JESUS CHRIST gave all these
 "Things to the Church. But what did AUSTIN un-
 "derstand by the Church? Even the faithful People
 "wherever they are, the *Wheat of GOD*, the good
 "Grain, the good Fishes, as He calls them, in one Word,
 "the Saints, true Believers: It was from this Source
 "that He derived the Validity of the Sacraments and
 "other Functions of the Episcopacy, and not from the
 "Pastors. And I say the same Thing. Whatever
 "the Bishops or Pastors do, They do it in the Name
 "of the Church, and consequently in the Name of
 "JESUS CHRIST; for the Name of CHRIST is in
 "the Church. It is the Church that preaches by them,
 "the Church administers the Sacraments by them,
 "governs by them, censures, suspends, absolves or ex-
 "communicates by them: The Bishops or Pastors are
 "her Ministers and the Dispensators of her Rights".

It is very probable, that this Quotation may sound a
 little too *Democratical* in the Ears of some genuine Pro-
 testants: But there will be no Danger at all of our being
 the worse Protestants for taking it into our serious Con-
 sideration. And besides, we may well think seriously
 upon it, especially considering, that Father PAUL of Ve-
 nice, in his Treatise of Beneficiary Matters, is so ingenuous
 as both to affirm that in the Beginning the Government
 of

of the Church had altogether a Democratical Form, and to give a punctual and observable Account also how it came by Degrees to be altered.

But how, will you say, came particular Churches, who are the first Subject of Ecclesiastical Offices, Gifts and Powers to be deprived of them, in such a Scandalous Manner as they are in the greatest Part of the Christian World? And, alas! it must be declared from the best Writers that this has come to pass thro' the Negligence of the Churches and the Ambition of their Pastors: These were the fatal Causes, why designing Men, regardless of the plain and obvious Sense of the Apostolical Writings, have gone aside from the Simplicity of them, and advanc'd their own Power upon the Ruins of those Churches which they have impiously subverted: And hence the Observation of AQUINAS, with reference to the Time, when Bishops became endowed with worldly Honours and Offices, with great temporal Powers and Possessions, may hold good with regard to the Time when the People grew utterly negligent of the Privileges belonging to them, Then arose the Race of the Giants in the Church, and then raised the Proud Tower of Babel (e): For, from that Time, Metropolitan Cities were by Degrees raised to be the Seats of Metropolitan Ministers: And so, according to the Preeminence, Note and Superior Power of Places in the Roman Empire, the Order to be observed among Churches was to be constituted: Thus at length, from the Division of the Commonwealth and the Civil Districts, the Political Division of the Churches into Diocesses and Provinces obtained and was fixed and established, as several learned Men have observ'd and prov'd, and particularly the learned JUSTELLUS (f).—And

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(e) Ex tunc, exorti sunt in Ecclesia Gigantes, in magnis et mirabilibus supra se ambulantes, qui potius videntur Reges vel Marchiones quam Episcopi:—Et ideo non mirum, si per eos Erigatur Sicut Babylonis et terrena Civitas dilatetur.

T. Aquin. in Gen. VI.

(f) Justel. J. C. in Not. ad Cod. Canon. p. 221.

there is a great deal of Truth in the honest Declaration of Father PAUL: He having said, that *the last Resolution of Ecclesiastical Matters in the more early Times was in the General Congregation of the Church*, and that *this Form was still on Foot in the Year Two Hundred and Fifty*, for which He appeals to CYPRIAN's Epistles; He then proceeds to declare as follows, "The Goodness and Charity of the Bishops made their Opinion for the most Part to be followed and by little and little was the Cause that the Church, Charity waxing cold, not regarding the Charge laid upon them by CHRIST, did leave the Care to the Bishop: And Ambitions, a witty Passion, which doth insinuate itself in the Shew of Vertue, did cause it to be readily embraced. But the principal Cause of the Change was the ceasing of Persecution: For then the Bishop did erect as it were a Tribunal which was much frequented; because, as Temporal Commodities, so Suits did increase. — Then the Tribunal of the Bishop began to be a common Pleading-Place, having Execution by the Ministry of the Magistrate, and to gain the Name of Episcopal Jurisdiction and Audience, &c" (g). And perhaps, as the learned Mr. Abbot FLEURY has observed in his *Discourses on Ecclesiastical History*, GOD has permitted these Disorders in his Church to instruct Men from their own Experience strictly to follow His Precepts and not to endeavour to maintain His Religion by the Maxims of Worldly Policy.

I have observed already concerning some Circumstances in the Worship of GOD and the Government of particular Churches, that natural Light and Christian Prudence, according to the general Rules of GOD's Word, may regulate them; And therefore it seems to arise from a captious and quarrelsome Humour, when any cry out upon us, where is your positive Commands, produce your express Institution for this Practice and the other

(g) History of the Council of Trent. p. 331.

other Custom in your Churches: For in such Things the Light of Nature is sufficient to direct and guide us; and the Obligation of Churches, as well as particular Persons, to conform to this is such, that it would be impertinent and useless, if not pernicious, to make permanent Additions: If therefore any Churches, instead of conforming to their natural Light in such Things, should invent sundry odd Modes and Rites of their own, and require canonical Conformity to them, without shewing the Tendency and Usefulness of them towards our Edification and proving the Necessity of observing them with Relation to the Duties which they are invented to subserve; I am sure, that neither the Word of GOD nor Christian Prudence will justify them in finding out and imposing such odd Inventions, nor any Christian in submitting unto them: And I may not fear to assert, that a great Part of those Disorders, which have arisen in the Christian World, have bin occasioned by usurping a Legislative Power over the Churches in such trifling Oddnesses.

I could muster an Army of Protestant Authors who are of the same Mind, if there were Occasion: But I shall content my self with reciting some Passages out of a few of them only. The good and worthy Confessor and Martyr JOHN HUSS said unto his Bohemians concerning many of the Things which the Priests and Prelates of his Day called Order, that they produced all manner of Confusion among Christians: *Multa, says He, que illi Ordinem dicunt, omnium Rerum in Christianismo Confusionem pariunt.* The learned WHITAKER urges to BELLARMINE, *What! were the old Figures taken away that there might be Room for new ones? Were those that were Divine taken away that such as are humane might succeed them (a)?* And the Magdeburgensian Centuriators teach us, that, while indifferent Things are left free, we may lawfully use them; but, when they are imposed, for the maintaining of our Liberty we should

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(2) Whitaker, Cont. Bellarm. Tom. 2. Cont. 4. 9. 7. C 3. p. 737.

withstand and oppose them (c). CALVIN maintains, that, as no Doctrine, so no sacred Sign, should be admitted among the Pious unless it appear to come from GOD (d). LUTHER is free to affirm, that all humane Ceremonies have two Properties of the Devil, Lying and Murthering (e). BEZA goes so far as to call such Inventions the Ensigns of the Priests of Baal (f). ZANCHY was not afraid to tell Queen ELIZABETH, who was more fond of Shew and Pomp in the Worship of GOD than real Devotion and the truest Lovers of it, that all these Pomps and Popish Ceremonies are nothing else but whorish Paintings, invented and devised to the End that Men might be enticed by them to spiritual Fornication (u). Nay even Dr. MORTON scruples not to say, that Ritual Traditions, which pertain to Order and the Rites of Divine Worship, are to be received only so far as they clash not with Truth and Piety, Simplicity and Christian Liberty (z). And I will add some weighty Passages from the great and generously good Mr. HOWE, who, in shewing The Carnality of Religious Contentions, says, that, the less Things are, the greater the Sin in making them necessary, and Christians of one Communion and other [to wit, that are fond of their own Inventions] do in Effect say, if you will not take Christianity with these Additions of ours, you shall not be Christians, you shall have no Christian Ordinances, no Christian Worship: We will, as far as in us is, exclude you from Heaven itself and all the Means of Salvation: And he cites a remarkable Passage of the Emperor MAXIMILIAN the Second to a certain Prelate, namely, That there was no Sin, no Tyranny more grievous than to affect Dominion over Men's Consciences, and they who

(c) Magdeburg. Centuriat. Cent. 3. Cap. 4. Col. 85.

(d) Calvin. Harmon. Evangel. in Matth. XXI. 25.

(e) Luther. Tom. 4. Fol. 351.

(f) Beza in Epist. 8. ad Grindal, p. 210.

(u) Zanchii Epist. ad Regin. Elizabetham. Fol. 244.

(z) Morton. Apolog. Par. 21. l. 1. C. 42. p. 139.

do so go about to invade the Tower of Heaven: And it may well be accounted a Remarkable Saying, as coming from so great a Prince, who lived and expired in the Romish Communion. Nor may I omit the Remark of the warm and zealous Dr. HEIDAN, that it has bin owing to the Labour of ERASMUS and CASSANDER, [and I may add of GROTIUS; for he followed and vindicated them] that, altho' they wish some smaller Things might be reformed, nevertheless some of the chief Defects of the Romish Church are concealed or lightly touched by them: Hence, says he, it is come to pass, that in some Churches, and in the English Church it especially appears very evident, while they have reformed their Doctrine, they have not at the same Time amended their Order; but still continue a Government in some Measure like that among the Papists (&).

But, to return, altho' some Circumstances of Worship and Government may be regulated by natural Light as I have bin saying, for the Benefit of the Churches, and for this Reason the Apostle Paul frequently appeals unto it in Things belonging to the Order of the Churches; nevertheless we are satisfied, that the Ecclesiastical State, of which I have bin treating, is a Divine Institution: For so it appears to be from its Nature and Tendency, from its peculiar Relation to our great SAVIOUR, from the great Glory resulting to GOD by an accurate Conformity to it, and from those peculiar Duties and spiritual and holy Methods of Worship appointed in it.

If then the Rules of CHRIST be observed, and Christians will but exercise their Reason and common Prudence in

(&c) Erasmi & Cassandri Potissimum Labor qui dum leviora quadam reformati optant, præcipuos Ecclesia Rom. Nevos dissimulant aut transliunt: Unde & factum in quibusdam Ecclesiis, ut in Anglicanâ præsertim patet, non simul cum Reformatione Doctrinæ, Ordo immutatus est; sed Hierarchia & Episcopatus, qualis in Papatu ex Parte cernitur, reserata sint. D. Abraham. Heidani Falsic. Disputat. Theologic. de Societarianismo. p. 10.

in conforming to those Rules; that is, in other Words, if we are but *Men and Christians*, if we will but be governed by *Reason and the Revelation* of CHRIST'S Churches, which shine with intarninated Honours from the Light that they have borrowed from the two great Luminaries of the Church and the World, *Reason and Revelation*.

It is to be hoped, that, under the Light and vital Heat of these glorious Luminaries, *the Churches*, that have hitherto bin as it were under those *Clods of the Valley*, their heavy and earthly Priests, will e'er long arise out of the *Earth* and blossom in a fair Profession of Christianity and abound in all the *Fruits of Righteousness* under a Rational and Scriptural Order.

But, if other Churches love to continue in a degenerate and corrupt State and *hate to be reformed*; God forbid, that *the Churches of NEW-ENGLAND* should ever return to their miserable Condition: These Churches have come out from among them; but it is to be wished and prayed, that they may never forget the Goodness of GOD in bringing them out, nor fail to answer the gracious Intentions of our strong REDEEMER in so doing.

Let these Churches then be careful, lest Ignorance, Negligence, Sloth and Wickedness should prove their Ruin, as they have bin the Ruin of other Churches: Let them never blindly resign themselves to the Direction of their Ministers; but consider themselves, as Men, as Christians, as Protestants, obliged to judge and act for themselves in all the weighty Concernments of Religion: Blessed be God, that our Churches have hitherto manifested themselves worthy of this Privilege: And may they still continue so! Nor let it ever be said to our Reproach, as it must be if ever it be said at all, that we were possessed of all those invaluable Privileges, which particular Churches by Reason and CHRIST'S Appointment can claim, but were either unacquainted with them, or negligent in the Improvement of them, or by

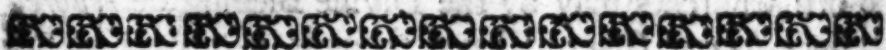
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our Sin and Impiety have forfeited and lost them: For, if ever this should be said, it must at the same Time be proclaimed, that the Glory is departed from NEW-ENGLAND.

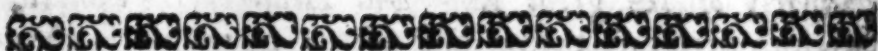
Several Things have bin published by our eminent Predecessors, *of whom the World was not worthy*, in order to shew these Churches their Liberties and fire their Souls with a becoming Affection and Zeal for them: But most of those Composures are not known among us: Inasmuch therefore as I have the same sincere Regard for the best Interests of these Churches; I could not but think it my Duty to *produce my Sentiments* concerning the Privileges of these Churches, which I know to be conformable to those of my ever honoured Predecessors and Fathers in many of their *printed Treatises and Manuscripts*, and to *publish* them for the Benefit of these Churches, that so they might *know themselves and learn to pity and pray for their Brethren*, who are groaning under National Establishments and long to be restored to our Liberties: And, that so our Churches may by the Divine Blessing be *restored to their former Glory*, I have thought it proper to use my best *Endeavours for the reforming of particular Churches by setting their distinguishing Liberties before them and soberly apologizing for them.*

But, to conclude this Preface or Introduction to the particular Discourses which follow, I would make one Observation, which may not be omitted without a manifest Injury to these Churches: 'Tis this, that altho' these Churches, apprehending the *Congregational Way* to be established on the *Dictates of Reason* and by the *Authority of the great King and Head of the Church*, therefore prefer it before any other; nevertheless they have great Charity and Esteem for those, who, being unacquainted with this Way, cannot therefore approve of it: It is indeed a Grief to our Churches, that there are sober and honest Persons in other Communion, who are so strangely prepossessed, not to say prejudiced,

by Interest or Education against those that are of the *Congregational Persuasion*, that they are ready to brand them with the opprobrious Names of *Schismatics*, *Enthusiasts* and what not.— But *we have not so learned CHRIST*: For, altho' we prefer the Constitution of these Churches before any other; still we think it *our Duty to love, and shew our Affection to all good and well disposed People* of whatever Communion or religious Profession they may be, to speak well and handsomely concerning them and serve them to the uttermost of our Power: Nor indeed have we any Scruple about admitting any pious *Baptist, Presbyterian or Episcopalian* into our Communion: Not only our *Houses and Hearts*, but our *Churches* also are open to them, as soon as in a Judgment of Charity we have Reason to think them to be *Persons of good Understanding, Piety and Vertue*.



The





The *distinguishing Privileges of*
the Churches in NEW ENGLAND
maintained.

THE Nature, Grounds and Reasons, *Antiquity and Advantages of Congregational Churches* have in the preceeding Discourse bin briefly, but, I hope, honestly and faithfully represented; and a short, tho' I think sufficient, *Answer* has been produced to such *Objections* as are usually offered against the Way of these Churches. What I now propose is, more particularly to state, assert and vindicate the *distinguishing Liberties of these Churches from Scripture and Reason and the approved Records of pure Antiquity*: And, as there are some later *Writers*, who have either inadvertently or from the *constraining Power of Truth* bore their Testimony to the *Religious Privileges* claimed by our Churches, I have tho't it my Duty to consult these *Writers* and make the best Use of them that I could on this Occasion.

Chap.

Chapter I.

The Right of these Churches to *chuse*
their own Ministers and other Officers
 asserted and vindicated.

Proposing thus to apologize for the distinguishing
 Privileges of these Churches; I begin with the
Power and Liberty of chusing their own Officers: A
 Power and Liberty, of which they have bin long pos-
 sessed, and to the Enjoyment of which they have a
 satisfactory and valid Title.

In order to know what Methods and Rules our
 blessed LORD and SAVIOUR would have to be ob-
 served by His Churches; we must *observe the Conduct*
and consult the Writings of His Apostles, the Prime
 Ministers of His Spiritual Kingdom, who were perfect-
 ly acquainted with His Mind, who steadily conformed
 unto it, and in their Writings have clearly revealed it:
 For it is *thro' their Word*, that we are to believe and
 judge and act in Ecclesiastical Affairs.

If therefore *in their Days*, without their discounte-
 nancing such a Practice, the Churches *electd their own*
Officers; the Churches have the same Power and Right
still and ought to exercise the same: But this Matter of
Fact shall be rendred manifest and incontestible, that
the Churches in the Days of the Apostles chose their own
Officers: And, when this is made out, methinks there
can be no Difficulty in allowing the Conclusion which is
drawn from it.

Now any one, that *has Eyes and will see*, may be-
 hold in the first Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*
 that *the Church were not excluded even in the Choice of*

an Apostle, who was to supply the Place from which JUDAS by Transgression fell: For, altho' an Apostle was an extraordinary Officer, so that if the People had not bin concerned in the Election of such an Officer, probably they would have bin satisfied; yet it is very clear, that the Church appointed two, out of which one was to be chosen to supply the Place of JUDAS; and it is equally clear, that, when the Lot fell upon MATTHIAS, he was by the Suffrage of the Church chosen into the Number of the Apostles: For, altho' to serve a base Design it was on Purpose translated in our Version, at Verse the Twenty sixth of that Chapter, *he was numbered with the Apostles*; nevertheless all, that understand any Thing of the Greek, must needs know the Truth of what the best Criticks inform us, namely, that MATTHIAS was chosen by all the Votes into the Number of the Apostles (a).

And what can our modern boasted Successors from the Apostles say to this? Here was an Officer, an extraordinary Officer, who received his Calling and extraordinary Authority from JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF immediately; and yet the Church, in the Presence of the Apostles, first appointed two Persons, and then by their common Consent and Suffrage approved the Person whose Lot it was to be chosen by them! Truly they might as well resist the Light of EUCLID'S Elements as the Light which appears in this Matter; and, if it were as much for their Interests, it is very probable that they would do so.

But surely, from this celebrated Instance, Christians have now sufficient Instruction and Authority to chuse their own Officers: For, if the People had a considerable Hand in the Choice of an Apostle, certainly their Right to chuse ordinary Officers cannot well be disputed; and, if in the Presence of the Apostles, the People elected one into their Number, nor were excluded from this Liberty,

(a) $\Sigma \Upsilon \text{NKAT}\Phi\text{H}\Phi\text{I}\Sigma \Theta \text{H}$, h. e. *Omnium Calculis allectus.*

erty, nor yet abridged in it by the present Apostles, it would now be a bold Attempt in any to *deprive them of their Liberty to chuse their ordinary Officers*: I say, a bold Attempt; because all such as would *deprive the People of GOD of their Liberty to chuse their own Officers*, and by the Exclusion of them would *take this Power into their own Hands*, are very assuming and arrogate to themselves more than the Apostles of CHRIST, whose Power over the Church was doubtless extraordinary.

This, it must be confessed, was a remarkable Instance and Proof of it, that *the Apostles were true and hearty Friends to the Liberties of their Christian Brethren*: But this is not the only Instance, wherein we find them to have bin so: For, when *Deacons* were to be appointed, they were far from taking that Affair into their own Hands; but, as we read in Act. VI. and 2, they *called the whole Multitude* unto them and advised them to *look out seven Men who might be fit for that Business*: And upon this it follows, that *the Saying pleased the whole Multitude*, and accordingly they *chose seven Persons*, whose Names are afterwards mentioned: And, having proceeded thus far, they then *set the Deacons* elected before the Apostles, who, when they had prayed, *laid their Hands upon them*.

And, that the Apostles continued to be Favourers of the People's Right to *chuse their Officers*, may further be argued from Act. XIV. 23, where we read of the Apostles PAUL and BARNABAS *ordaining Elders in every Church*: For, whereas our Version to serve a Favourite Turn renders it only *ordained*, it is certain that the Word signifies an *Election* or a *lifting up of Hands* (c) in every Church accompanying it, as every one that has but a small Acquaintance with the Greek cannot but be sensible. So that, altho' we can readily allow the Truth of what the learned DU PIN observes, namely,

(c) ΚΕΙΡΟΤΟΝΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ.

namely, *that, after the Death of those who had bin ordained by the Apostles, the People elected (o)*; yet we must further insist, that *before the Death of the Apostles and in their Presence the People elected.*

We see then, that these Churches have *the Authority of the Apostles* to countenance them in the Choice of their Officers: If therefore the *Apostles* themselves would not *nominate and constitute Officers* in the Churches, but it was *their Right* according to CHRIST's Will to chuse their own Officers; it must still be *the Right and Liberty of the Churches to elect their Officers*: Well therefore may we say with CHRYSOSTOM (p), *So it was then, h. e. in the Days of the Apostles, and so it ought to be now.*

But, altho' these Scriptural Testimonies are enough to convince us, that, as we are *in the rightful Possession of this Liberty*, we ought by all Means to keep it, nor to let it go upon any Account or Pretence whatsoever; there are however *various Reasons* besides, which will serve to betray the Folly and Stupidity of those People, that can tamely bear to be kept out of this Liberty, and at the same Time to *confirm these Churches in their Resolutions not to part with it.*

For it is certainly much more just and honest, much more fit and safe, that the *Officers of the Church should be chosen by the People*, than it can be to have them *nominated and appointed by any one Bishop*; because a *Bishop* may with much more Ease be deceived and corrupted than an whole Church, and may be very apt to abuse his arrogated Power: And it is entirely reasonable, that the Church should chuse those that are to be *set over them in the LORD*, lest otherwise ignorant, *dronish, wicked and contemptible Officers should be thrust and imposed upon them*: And it is furthermore meet; because there is *no Likelihood* of it, that *the People will*
love

(o) Du Pin. Biblioth. Tom. I. prop. ad Fin.

(p) Chrysostom. in Act. VI. 5.

love and revere, bear with spiritual Profit and submit with Delight to such Persons as are thrust upon them against their Inclinations: And, moreover, there is all the Reason in the World, that Men should have the same Liberty in Religious Respects as they have in Civil: Men can chuse their Friends, their Lawyers, their Physicians: And can there be any good Reason assigned, why they should be hindred from the Exercise of the like Liberty in Spiritual Regards? Truly no! They ought to have equal religious Liberty; nor ought they to be restrained in the Exercise of a Liberty so reasonable, as this of chusing their own Ecclesiastical Officers, upon the Choice of which their everlasting Welfare so nearly depends.

Besides; The Remarks of the famous CALDERWOOD are worthy to be taken into our Consideration. Now He remarks in one Place, that common Sense teaches us, that a Bishop is not to be thrust upon an unwilling People, lest the unwilling People should either despise or hate their undesired Bishop (a):—And, in another Place, He says, that the whole Church ought to be concerned about the Means of Salvation (b), of which the Ministry is one.—And though, writes He, Popes have rob'd the Churches of this Liberty; [to wit, of chusing their own Ministers] yet Emperors and Princes should not assume this to themselves, but, as Nursing Fathers to the Church, if indeed they would be glad to bear that Character, they should restore this Liberty to the Churches (c).—And He remarks, that Experience with a loud Voice proclaims, that Churches are more or less flourishing as

(a) *In vitis Ecclesie non obtudendum communis Sensus docet, ne Plebs invita Episcopum non optatum aut contemnat aut oderit, &c. Didoclav. Altar. Damascen. p. 331.*

(b) *Nam de omnibus Mediis Salutis sollicita esse debet: Debet ergo eligere Pastorem unum ex mille. Ejusd. Auth. & Lib. p. 332.*

(c) *Non quia Pontifices hac Libertate spoliaverunt Ecclesias, eam sibi vindicare debuerunt Imperatores & Principes, sed ut Nutritii Advocati Ecclesie, si quidem his Elogiis gaudent, Ecclesiis restituere. Ejusd. Auth. & Libri. Pag. ead.*

as their Election is with more or less Freedom enjoyed (d). And, to these Remarks of one famous Person, I may add the Observations of another, GROTIUS, as I find them scattered up and down in his Book *de Imperio*; In one Place He says, That Election is rightly made by the Church according to the Law of Nature: For it is naturally allowed to every Society to procure those Things that are necessary for its Conservation; in the Number of which Things is the Disposition of Offices. Thus many Traders to Sea have the Right of chusing the Governor of their Ship; thus Travellers may chuse the Guide of their Journey, and a free People may chuse their King (e). In another Place, He asserts, It is altogether certain that in the ancient Church after the Apostolic Age, tho' the People could rightfully chuse their own Pastors, yet they did not always and every where improve and exercise their Right (f). And, to cite no farther, in another Place He observes, that even in later Ages the Right of chusing their Pastors was often allowed to the People alone: It is so plain and open, says He, that I need not take Notice of it (g).—Nor may I omit the kind Allowance of the ingenious and subtle CRELLIUS: For, altho' he, with his Brethren, is for having the Civil Magistrate to appoint Officers over the Churches, yet He thinks it ought to be observed, that Officers should not be committed to any without the Consent of the whole Church:

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Who-

(d) *Experientia ipsa elata Voce clamat magis aut minus florentes esse Ecclesias, prout magis aut minus libera Electio.* In Pag. ead. Ejusd. Lib. & Author.

(e) *Ab Ecclesia Electionem recte fieri probatur ex Jure naturali. Nam naturaliter Cuius unicus Permittitur ea procurare, que ad Conservationem sui sunt necessaria; in quo numero est Functionum Applicatio. Ita vectores multi Jus habent eligendi Gubernatorem Navis sue, viatores Itineris Ducem, Populus liber Regem.* Grot. de Imp. Sum. Potest. p. 258.

(f) *Omnino certum est in vetere Ecclesia post Apostolorum Aetatem, etsi Jure potius Plebs Pastores suos deligere, non id tamen semper ac ubique observatum* — Ejusd. Auth. & Lib. p. 260.

(g) *Sed Et Jus Pastores Eligendi—Sape solis Laicis concessum, apertius est quam ut doceri debeat.* Ejusd. Auth. & Libri. p. 267.

Whoever therefore, says He, it may be, that has the Choice or Nomination of Persons to these Ecclesiastical Offices; yet it ought to be allowed to all in the Church, that if they know any just Objection against the Election, they may bring it in proper Time and Place. And there will be Reason for it, if they can not only object some Crime, against them, but also prove such a Crime as ought deservedly to take him off from his Office. This is clearly to be found in that Canon, wherein it is prescribed, that such as are to be chosen should be blameless. Now how can this be known, unless Enquiry be made and all have the Liberty of bringing what they know concerning such a Matter.— And truly such an Election constituted in a Church as does not have this Liberty may lawfully be reprov'd and accounted vicious (b).

Now what is there of Weight to be produced against such Considerations as these? It would be impertinent to talk of an immediate Call from GOD to Ecclesiastical Offices: For such a Call is not now to be expected: And yet it would be very absurd to think of officiating in any Church without any Call or Invitation at all: For none may assume such Honours to themselves but such as are called of GOD.

If then any should argue for others, that they should nominate and appoint Officers over the Churches, and not the Churches themselves: This is what we peremptorily deny: For we cannot find, that GOD our SAVIOUR has given such Power to any Men, who are not of a particular Church, to appoint Officers in and over it. Nor can we by any Means allow, that a Number of Men of any particular Church, in Exclusion of the Multitude of their Brethren, should constitute Officers in that particular Church: For we apprehend, that, in Things which

(b) *Itaque quisquis tandem fit, qui eligat aut nominet Eos— semper permitti debet omnibus in Ecclesia, &c. Et sane quæ Electio in Ecclesia jam constituta talem Libertatem non relinquit illa jure reprehendi & vitiosa censeri potest. Gress. Ethic. Christian. L. IV. Cap. XXXI. p. 532.*

which concern the whole Church, *all the Church should be interested*; unless it can be made to appear, that *the great Head of the Church has empowered some only to act in the Matter*: Now we know and are assured, that *our blessed SAVIOUR has not committed to any particular Persons* of whatsoever Age or Quality *the Power of chusing Officers* for the whole Church: Nor has He indulged the Churches with the *Liberty of delegating their Power* to some of their Number to chuse for them: For no Part of that Power which *essentially* belongs to the Churches as such can be *delegated*; but every Part of such Power must be exercised by *the whole Churches*. And therefore this *Power of chusing*, as it belongs to the Churches *essentially* considered, must be *acted by the Bodies of particular Churches*.

There are some, who are almost ready to concede to these Things; but yet they are for *excluding the People* from the Election of Ecclesiastical Officers, *on the account of their Incapacity and unfitness* to form a right Judgment concerning Persons and to chuse wisely: I remember SIXTUS SENENSIS was of this Mind; for, altho' he acknowledges, that *both in the Times of the Apostles and of Pope LEO the People chose their Bishops*; yet, he adds (i), that *it was easy for the Multitude of the Faithful to do this then; for the People were then grave, moderate and concerned for the public Benefit*:— But now, continues He, *the People is a Beast of many Heads, always intent upon Factions and Seditions*: So that, *if they had this Liberty, it would produce the greatest Disturbance in the Church*: And Dr. THOMAS BURNET, Master of the Charter House, speaks to the same Purpose; for He says, that *Elections (r), as well as the Manner of Discipline, were formerly more popular, which insensibly to avoid Confusion devolved upon those who presided over the Church*.

G 2

But

(i) Sixtus Senens. Biblioth. Sanct. L. V. P. 466.

(r) Burnet. de Fide & Officiis Christianorum. Cap. IX.

But it is a sufficient Answer to all that can be said to this Effect, that *the People* by our great Lawgiver and His Apostles *are entrusted with this Privilege*, and therefore, for any to say that they are *not meet for this Privilege nor capable of discharging such a Trust*, it must reflect upon the *holy Apostles*, and even upon the *Wisdom of our great SAVIOUR*. And, if it should be granted, that the People may grow *factious* and troublesome in their Elections, and *Confusions* should arise by Means of them; what then? All, that this proves, is, that *Churches may degenerate*; and who denies that? But *such Degeneracy in them is to be lamented and reformed*; and the People should still possess and enjoy their *Privilege of chusing their Officers*. Even BZOVIVS the Jesuite was of this Mind, and he gives three Reasons why it should be so; namely, that *so no Pastor may be set over such as are unwilling to have him over them, that so the Pastor may be loved by his Sheep, and that so there may be as it were a Spiritual Marriage contracted between them by the Consent of both*.

The Sum of what has bin said is, that, both from *Scriptural Authority and Examples and from the Reasons of the Thing*, Churches should chuse their own Officers, and that the *Objections against their Enjoyment of this Liberty are of no Force and Validity*.

And, if we search the *Archives of Antiquity*, we shall find, that the *Primitive Churches* were in Possession of this Liberty, which thro' the Divine Goodness these Churches enjoy.

It appears from CLEMENT'S first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, a valuable and undisputed Remain of Antiquity, that *Bishops and Deacons* were constituted by the *Consent and Agreement or good Liking of the Church* (1); that the *Apostles* themselves appointed *qualified Persons* to the Ministerial Office with the *Choice of the whole Church*, and indeed that they were *not thought lawfully*
called

() . vid. Clement. Epist. I. ad Corinth.

called or chosen to their Offices, nor might reasonably challenge any Respect or Subjection from the People, unless the whole Church concurred in the Election of them.

It is plain from an Epistle of IGNATIUS written to the Fraternity of the Church, that he judg'd it *becoming for them to chuse their own Bishop* (t): For you must know, that, however despised the Fraternity may be by some who are very sanguine in their Appeals to Antiquity, yet *all the genuine Epistles of IGNATIUS, except one to POLYCARP, are directed to the Brethren*: And this especially is so, wherein it is said to be *becoming for them as a Church of GOD to chuse or appoint a Bishop*.

It is not to be doubted, but that ORIGEN was of the same Opinion; for he, writing concerning *the Cities of GOD*, even *the Churches of JESUS CHRIST*, and concerning the *Rulers of them*, affirms that they are to be *chosen* (r) *to their Office by the Churches which they rule*.

EUSEBIUS declares, that in the Year of our LORD 236, *all the Faithful* (u) *in ROME itself did meet together in one Place to chuse another Bishop in the Room of ANTERUS*: And he says, that ALEXANDER, Bishop of *Jerusalem* was chosen in this Manner, and then presented to the Neighbouring Bishops for their Approbation (u).

CYPRIAN a little while after testifies to *this Right of the People*, saying, that *they have the Power of chusing their own Ministers* (w) *over and over again*; as every one knows, that has ever consulted his Writings: And he acknowledges, that he was promoted Bishop, *Populi universi Suffragio*, by the Suffrage of the People (w).

The

(t) Ignat. Epist. ad Philadelph.

(r) Origen. cont. Cels. lib. ult. ad Fin.

(u) Euseb. l. VI. cap. 22.

(u) Euseb. l. VI. c. ii.

(w) Ipsa [Plebs] maxime habet Potestatem eligendi dignos Sacerdotes, &c. Cyprian. Epist. 4. vid. etiam in Epist. 68. & in alijs Locis.

(w) Cyprian. Ep. 55.

The first and most famous general Council of Nice, writing a *Synodal Epistle* to the *African Churches* to warn them against *Arianism*, exhorts them to *chuse orthodox Bishops in the Room of the Deceased, provided they be worthy* —: From which it should seem, they thought the *Election of the People* so necessary, that real Merit was not sufficient to make and constitute a Bishop without their free Election of him.

And that, in ancient Times a Conspiracy of Bishops could not chouse the People out of this their Right, we have a remarkable Instance to produce: For *Martin*, usually called Saint MARTIN, a little after CONSTANTINE, was made Bishop of *Turon* in *France* by the *People's Election and Consent*, notwithstanding all the Opposition that the *Bishops* could make against his Election and Settlement among them: And Abbot FLEURY, in his *Discourses on Ecclesiastical History*, rightly observes, that in those Times *so great a Regard was had to the People's Consent, that, if they refused to receive [a Bishop or Minister] after he was ordained, they were not forced to have him, but had another who was more agreeable to them.*

POSIDONIUS in the *Life of AUSTIN* says, That that Father was of the Opinion that (x) in ordaining Priests and Clerks the Consent of the Majority of Christians and the Custom of the Church should be followed.

In the Council at *Orleance* in the Year of our LORD, 540, this Rule was laid down, that *he is to be chosen by all who is to be set over all* (y): So that then the Churches were not so big but that all the People might join in chusing their Bishop.

And BELLARMIN himself confesses, that *it was the Custom in the Time of CHRYSOSTOM, AMBROSE, AUSTIN, LEO and GREGORY for the People to be*
con-

(x) *Augustinus in ordinandis Sacerdotes et Clericis Consen'um majorum Christianorum et Consuetudinem Ecclesie sequendam arbitrabatur.*
Posidon. in Vit. Augustin. Cap. XXI.

(y) *Cano. 3. de ordinand. Episcop.*

concerned in the Choice of their Bishop (z). And some of the Papists even go higher: For LORINUS, SALMERON and SANCTIUS, writing upon Act. XIV. 23. acknowledge, that it was *the Primitive and Apostolic Practice for the People to chuse their own Ministers.*

There are several Chronologers and Historians who relate concerning FELIX the Fourth, that ascended the Papal Chair in the Year of our LORD 525, that he first of all by a Law separated the Clergy from the People, while Divine Service was performing in the Churches; and BONIFACE the Second did the same after him: And the same Thing was decreed and confirmed afterwards by succeeding Popes and Synods: Now the very learned HOSPINIAN observes, that this was done by them for two Reasons, in the first Place, that *at length they might deprive the People of their Voices, their Suffrages and their Places in the Election of their Bishops*; and, in the next Place, that *so no one might be allowed in any Civil or Criminal Cause to call a Bishop or any Clergyman before a Secular Judge (p).*

Nay it seems to have bin the Custom of the Churches to be concerned in the Choice of their Ministers for near Thirteen Hundred Years together: For the Emperor FREDERIC the Second, who deceased in the Year 1250, is thought to be *the first, that was for excluding the Laity from the Election of their Officers*: But, that until then the People had their Suffrages, appears from the Decretal Epistles of GREGORY the Ninth (q). 'Tis true HILDEBRAND began to set up the Power of his Cardinals; but even he denied not *the Clergy and the People their Votes* in Comitiiis: So that until the Twelfth Century, it cannot be disputed, that even in
Rome

(z) Bellarmin. l. I. cap. IX. de Clericis.

(p) Hospinian. de Origin. Templor. l. 2. cap. I. p. 29.

(q) Chamier. de Ecclesia. Tom. V. p. 161.— *Electio Clericorum est Petitio Plebis.* Decret. Par. I. Distinct. 52.

Rome itself the People elected their Bishop. And THUANUS informs us (o), that in 585, a Popish Archbishop allowed the City of Magdeburg, *Jus vocandi ac constituendi Ecclesie Ministros, sicut antea habebat*; that is, their former Right of calling and appointing their own Ministers. And I may add, that, in a Gallican Council, convened in 1582, there was a Decree passed to this Effect, namely, *That so there may be a better Provision made for Cathedral Churches and Monasteries than there has bin, especially since Elections have bin taken away; we beseech and urge his most Christian Majesty by the Bowels of Divine Mercy and the Blood of CHRIST, that, from his singular Piety towards GOD, he would, for the Divine Glory and the Good of the Church, as also for the Freedom of his own Mind from the greatest Scruple and the Deliverance of his Conscience from the greatest Tortures, restore to the Church the Power of chusing fit and useful Pastors* (e).

Now it is very evident from these Testimonies, that in the Primitive Times the Right of the Churches to chuse their own Officers was acknowledged, maintained and exercised; and that this was one of the last Things which the Enemy of the best Interests of Mankind wickedly ravished from them.

Thus then we have Scripture, Reason and Equity, the Nature of Churches in their Institution and Ends, and the Practice of the Church in the first and some succeeding Ages, all conspiring to confirm this Privilege of the Churches to chuse their own Officers: Nor can we judge any otherwise, but that the Robbing the Churches of this Privilege was great and abominable Sacrilege.

But, if any should say, that, altho' the Right of chusing and calling their Ministers be in the People, yet de Facto in many Places, and even Places professing the Reformation, they are deprived of this Right; and how

(o) Thuan. lib. 83. Pag. 85.

(e) Bochart. in Decret. Eccles. Gallic. l. 5. Tit. 8. c. 7.

is *This* come to pass? In Answer to it, lest I should express myself with an exceptionable Vehemence, I chuse to transcribe the Answer of the very learned VOET to that Question, *Whether the Election and Calling of Ministers be in the Power of the Church?* 'Tis this. By Divine Right, says He, *This Power is in the Church. That any where This is either wholly or in Part given to Magistrates, Patrons, those who are honoured among Men, Bishops, Ediles or others; it is owing to humane Doings, Usurpations and Appointments: If therefore among Protestant and Reformed Divines you read of any such Thing; pray think, that they relate the Custom of the Place and the Manner there tolerated which could not be taken away; not that it is a Divine Right or the Doctrine of the Reformed or the Appointment of Fathers and Councils and the antient Church (f).* And I would take Leave to add, that, as the Divine Right of People's chusing their Ministers has bin already confirmed; so from *Fathers and Councils* it has bin shewn that the *Primitive Churches* possessed and exercised this Right: And to prove that this is the Doctrine of the Reformed, I would put my Reader in Mind, that LUTHER, both in his Book to the *Bohemians* (n) and in a *German* (o) Tract asserted and maintained this Principle; and not only He, but CALVIN (l), ZEP-
H PER,

(f) *An penes Ecclesiam? Id jure Divino. Quod alicubi in Totum aut ex Parte id tribuitur Magistratibus, Patronis, Honoratis in Seculo, Episcopis, Edilibus aut aliis quibuscunque; id ex Factis, Usurpationibus & Ordinationibus humanis ortum esse constat. Si ergo apud Theologos quosdam Protestantes & Reformatos tale quid legis; cogita eos Consuetudinem Loci sui referre & morem isthic toleratum, qui tolli nondum potuit; non Jus Divinum aut Doctrinam Reformatam aut Patrum, Conciliorum & antiqua Ecclesia Placitum. Voet. Par. II. l. I. Trac. I. C. IV.*

(n) Luther. in Lib. de instituendis Ministris ad Bohemos.

(o) Luther. in Scripto cui Tit. Quod Ecclesia Potestatem habent Eligendi & Deponendi Ministros.

(l) Calvin. Epist. 89.

PER (m), BALDWIN (c), the Synod of Dort (d), and the Leyden Divines (e) have held and maintained the same: And above all, the renowned FLACCUS ILLYRICUS in a Tract (f) has laboriously and learnedly proved this Point from every Argument that He could muster.

From the whole of what has bin offered; I would conclude this Chapter by saying, that, as these Churches are *in the rightful Possession of the Power and Liberty to chuse their own Officers*, which Power and Liberty they have recovered from the Oppression of unreasonable Men, while many Churches which are reckoned among the Reformed are not so happy as to enjoy it; *these Churches would do well to keep this Power and Liberty as the Apple of their Eye*, nor suffer themselves to be wrought upon so far as to part with a Privilege of so much Worth and Importance: They ought indeed, in the Use and Exercise of their Right, to *consult the Edification, Comfort and Satisfaction of their Neighbours*: But, considering their *rightful Claim* to the Choice of their own Officers and *the many ill Consequences* which will follow *upon their receding* from it; they ought not to allow any to destroy or *betray* this their valuable Liberty: And, if any should *sacrilegiously attempt* to rob them of this Liberty or by any Means to *hinder them in the free and perfect Exercise* of it, they would be very much in the Right of it to consider them among *their greatest Enemies*.

Chap. II.

(m) Zepper. Polit. Ecclesiast. l. 2. cap. 3.

(c) Baldwin. lib. Casuum. l. 4. cap. 5.

(d) Vide Constitution Eccles. Synod. National. Dort. 1578.

(e) Synopsis Leidenf. Professor. Disp. 42. Thes. 31. 36.

(f) Flaccus Illyric. in Tract. cui Tit. *Quod Electio Episcoporum non ad Ecclesiasticos solum, sed & ad Laicos (ut vocant) pertinet.*

Chapter II.

The Right of these Churches *to ordain their Ministers* stated and argued.

THE Design of this Chapter is not to deny, that, in Churches which are furnished with Presbyteries, *those Presbyteries may use Imposition of Hands and ordain*: For this is what is readily acknowledged by these Churches.

Nothing can be more plain, than that the Church is before its ordinary Officers: I say its *ordinary Officers*: For our blessed LORD might, as He actually did, *ordain Apostles*, when there was yet no Evangelical Church, to *disciple the Nations and baptize* them and *gather Churches* out of such disciplined and baptized Nations: But it does not appear, that the Apostles either did or could *ordain any stated Officers*, until there were *Churches formed* for the Reception of them: So that we judge it an absurd and extravagant Thing, and the Whim of only some Ecclesiastical *Don Quixots*, to ascribe the Continuance of the Church to the *successive uninterrupted Ordination of Officers*: For, if there were any such Thing as a *successive uninterrupted Ordination of Officers*, which there is hardly one sound Protestant that can believe there is; still *this successive Ordination of Officers* wholly and entirely depends upon the *Continuance of the Church*, and must be an *Act of the Church*, and therefore it can *never be a Means of communicating Ecclesiastical Power to others*, without which there would be an End of all Ecclesiastical Power, as some fondly imagine or would make us believe that they imagine.— And besides; It must be not only a vain and idle, but

an impious Attempt, to derive a Succession, upon which the Being of a Church shall depend, thro' the Presence of CHRIST with the Bishops of Rome, who for an hundred Years together, namely from the Year 900 to the Year 1000, were Monsters for Ignorance, Lust, Pride and Luxury, as BARONIUS himself acknowledges, A. D. 912. 5. 8.

And yet there are here and there some defective Protestants, who are fond of their *uninterrupted Line of Succession*. But we may fitly enquire of them, Why there is such a Thing as a *Degradation*, and for what Purpose it is practised at any Time among them? Certainly you will all allow, that they, who by *Schism* are cut off from the Church, must also be cut off from that Part of Apostolical Power to which they made their Pretensions; and so it cannot be indelibly fixed on them. And surely, where no Part of the Apostolical Power can be claimed, there can be no Succession to it. Now, in the Church of Rome, it has bin proved by ONUPHRIUS an Historian of their own, that there have bin at least *Thirty Schisms*, by several, sometimes no less than *five or six* at once, pretending to the Popedom: And one of the Schisms lasted more than *Fifty Years*, when one Pope sat at Rome, another at Avignon: Nay BELLARMINE is obliged to acknowledge, that for above *Eighty Years* together, the Church for want of a *lawful Pope* had no other Head than what was in Heaven. And, if *Schism* destroys the Succession of Apostolical Power, certainly *damnable Heresy, Devilism and Atheism* will also do it. Now what can be said to the Complaints of BARONIUS about the End of the Ninth Century, *How deformed*, says he, *was the Romish Church, when Whores no less powerful than wile bore the chief Sway at Rome, and at their Pleasure changed Sees and appointed Bishops, and which is horrible to mention, did thrust their own Gallants into the See of Saint Peter.* There cannot therefore be any Thing more evident than that the Succession has failed; tho' indeed, if

it were not so, the *uninterrupted Succession* can never be proved.

But there are some, who, tho' they could never find in their Hearts to believe the mad Whim of *Papal Succession* and a *successive Ordination*, yet, in order to establish an Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction or Government, are for giving the Power of Ordination into the Hands of the Bishop or of a Synod: But it is to be hoped, that these Churches will know better than to give such an inestimable Branch of Ecclesiastical Power out of their own Hands into the Hands of others, who ought not to have it, and who in the Possession of it have always made the worst Use of it.

These Churches are far from disowning, that, when a particular Church has Elders of its own, these Elders by the Imposition of Hands may ordain such other Officers, as that Church may see Cause to elect: But our Episcopal and Presbyterian Brethren still insist upon it, that Ordination is a Part of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, to be dispensed, by the Bishop, say the former, by the Eldership and that consociated, say the latter.

It is evident, nor has any one yet bin able to prove to the contrary, that TIMOTHY was ordained by the Presbytery, not by any particular Bishop alone: And, for ought that yet appears, the Presbytery which laid Hands upon that Evangelist, might be the Presbytery of a particular Church, and not of a Synod or inferior Classis: Nay it is very probable, that it was the Presbytery of a particular Church: For, altho' PAUL and BARNABAS were Apostles, yet they were not ordained [that is to say, if they were ordained] by any Classis or Presbyterial Synod, nor yet by one single Person; but by the Presbytery of one particular Church, namely the Church at Antioch.

But you will enquire, it is very likely, how it appears that the Eldership, in Act. XIII, which ordained PAUL and BARNABAS, was but the Presbytery of one particular Congregation? And I answer, that this is plain

plain from Act. XIV. 27, which clearly represents to us, that the Church of *Antioch* was not so great but that it could assemble in one Place; and, that the whole Multitude at the Return of PAUL and BARNABAS from the Synod at Jerusalem met together to bear the Epistle which that Synod had sent them, this is very manifest from Act. XV. 30 and 31. Now therefore the Conclusion must be this, that, the Church at *Antioch* being but one particular Church, the Presbytery, by which PAUL and BARNABAS were ordained, could not be a Synodical Presbytery, but the Presbytery of a particular Church.

There is, I confess, a considerable Noise made both by our Presbyterian and Episcopal Brethren about the Epistles to TIMOTHY and TITUS: For, while the former are endeavouring to support and establish their beloved Classes and Synods from TIMOTHY'S Ordination, the latter continue to insist upon it, that these Epistles are purely Episcopal: But the best Construction, which can be made of those Epistles is plainly this; to wit, that they were not designed for those Evangelists alone, nor any Ministers alone, but for a State that was mixed, wherein the said Evangelists, having some assisting Presbyters or other Officers, administered and executed the Affairs of the Christian Society with the Allowance, Consent and good Agreement of the People: For, altho' the Epistles be written by Name, and say especially, to TIMOTHY and TITUS; still there can be no Question but that they were really intended for general Use and Advantage: And this is what we may fairly conclude from the Apostle's Wish, *Grace be with you, Grace be with you all*, which closes one Epistle and another: For it cannot be well imagined, that these Wishes are only belonging to the Evangelists, to whom the Epistles are directed. Why then should it be conceded to our Brethren of the Church of England, that the Apostle writes his three Epistles to two Arch-Bishops or Metropolitans; especially when, as the famous CALDER-

WOOD observes, *there is not so much as one Thing inserted in them that can properly serve the Arch-Bishop or Metropolitan?* For, adds he, here are no *Apostolical Monitions about convoking Synods of Bishops, concerning Consecrations of Bishops, concerning the Correction of the Defects and Excesses of Prelates, and receiving Appeals from Episcopal Consistories; altho' these, according to your Hierarchical Gentlemen, are the chief Offices of Arch-Bishops* (x).— And why should we allow those Things to be found in these Epistles, which our Presbyterian Brethren fondly value, when no such Things are in these Epistles? If it were actually declared in them, that in Crete and at Ephesus there were Presbyteries; yet where do we read of the Powers to be claimed by these Presbyteries or the Subjection of these Presbyteries to other and superior Judicatories?

As to those, who confidently report, that *Ordination cannot be validly and lawfully performed but by a Bishop*; we think it a sufficient Answer to say, that we find the first Mention of a *Bishop* distinct from *Presbyters* to have bin about *Three Hundred Years* after our SAVIOUR: And this is no more than what many of the more sober and considerate of the *Episcopalian Writers* are free to acknowledge: And we conceive, that even then, for ought that the Friends of *Diocesan Episcopacy* have bin able to prove to the contrary, there was no *Bishop* who had any *Jurisdiction* or *Authority* over other *Ministers*, but who in common with other *Ministers* ruled and governed the *Churches* according to their Consent and Agreement.

But, if for Argument's sake it should be allowed, that the *Bishop* was a distinct Order from the *Presbyter*; still this will be no Demonstration, that the *Bishop* alone has the Power of ordaining: How then shall we be made sensible of it, that the *Bishop* alone should have this Power? Alas! Confident Assertions of a Thing will

(x) Didocleav. Altar. Damascen. p. 37.

will never convince us concerning the Truth of it, especially of such a Thing as this which can never be proved: For in the whole New Testament there is not so much as one Instance of an Ordination that was performed by a single Person.

Let us therefore turn to our Presbyterian Friends and attend to what they have to offer: Now they are ready to object and say, *But, dear Brethren, where do you read of any Ordinations but by Presbyters?* For Answer to these our entirely beloved Brethren, there is no need of referring them to the Direction, in Numb. VIII. 10, *Thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Children of Israel shall put their Hands upon the Levites;* from which Direction some have argued, that when a Church is destitute of Elders and Elders cannot conveniently be had from another Church, then Imposition of Hands may be performed by some of the considerable Men of the Congregation, altho' they should not be Elders; and that therefore, what was performed in the Church of Israel, may in the like Case be at present performed.

But, waving this Argument, I shall now remark and shew, that the Case may be such as that, if Ordination be really requisite, by the Imposition of Hands, then it may be performed by such as are not Officers at all in the Church: Now this is very clear; for the State of Things may be such, that there cannot be any Ordination at all by the Imposition of the Hands of Elders: And in such a State as this, as there are no Elders or Bishops, either there must be no Ordination by the Imposition of Hands at all, or else the Ordination must be performed by such as are no Officers: And, that this may be the Case of a Church, that Ordination cannot be performed by Officers in it, this shall presently be made evident.

To such therefore as are of the Opinion, that Ordination by Officers is so necessary that there is no performing it without them, we may calmly address ourselves and expostulate; Dear Sirs, How will you prove the Necessity

Necessity of Ordination for Elders or Bishops? And, if you will have it necessary, I pray, what shall be done where there are no Ecclesiastical Officers to be had? For this may be the Case of a Society of Christians by Shipwreck thrown upon a Place where there are no Elders; say, upon the Island of Bermuda, which erects its solitary Head in the Atlantic at a Distance from other Places: Suppose in this Case Mr. PAUL should providentially come among them, who had never bin separated to the Evangelical Ministry; might he not teach and instruct them in the Principles of Christianity? And, if Ordination were necessary in order to his Dispensation of the Word and Ordinances, might not the poor Shipwreck'd Christians properly ordain him and separate him by the Imposition of Hands to the Work of the Ministry? or, which to me is the same Thing, by the laying on of their Hands, commend him to the Grace of GOD in that Work to which they have called him? Truly it is very plain to me that they might. This is certain, that, at the Beginning of the Reformation in Scotland, the old Manner of electing and ordaining Ministers was perform'd without Imposition of Hands, as may be seen in KNOX's Forms prefix'd to the old Psalms: And the ingenious STEUART, in the Fourteenth Page of his Collections, affirms this Ordination was lawful and valid. If therefore it should be thought too much for Brethren chosen to it to impose Hands on elected Officers; certainly we may claim the electing and ordaining Power for the Brethren without it. And this is what all Men would soon discover, if it were not for the Interest of some worldly minded Persons to entangle the Sentiments of Mankind and lead them aside.

Antiquity is no Stranger to such an Opinion as ours; For FRUMENTIUS, who was not in holy Orders, went and preach'd to the Indians, and afterwards was made a Priest and Bishop by ATHANASIUS: But no one that I know of ever faulted his Conduct: Nor has the King of the Iberians bin condemned, altho', before he was or-

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ordained by Elders or even baptized, he converted his Subjects, and, according to the ancient Historian, before he was initiated himself was the Apostle of his Country. And it is probable, that many even in the Times of the Apostles preach'd and receiv'd Orders from the Churches to which they came: For SANCTIUS (a) affirms and acknowledges with BARONIUS, that more than Fifteen Thousand went out from Jerusalem to propagate the Gospel: But we can by no Means suppose, that they were ordained canonically and in an ample Form, as indeed these Roman Catholicks themselves are free to declare that they were not thus ordained. To be sure the Bohemian Brethren, whom they call Picards, thought themselves empowered to ordain their own Ministers: For, in the Year 1456, they form'd themselves into Christian Churches, and from twelve that were chosen they selected and constituted three by Lot for their Ministers (b). And the first Reformers laid this Principle of the worthy JOHN HUSS as the Foundation of the Reformation, that the Law of CHRIST is sufficient for the Government of His militant Church without the Addition of any humane Laws: And, lest they or their Posterity should fall off from this Foundation, they protested, that, in order to preserve their Assemblies to professing the pure Doctrine of the Gospel from being scattered, they would be careful to keep a Supply of faithful Ministers; and that therefore, without expecting any in Orders to come over to them from the Church of Rome, they were (c) for ordaining them at home, whom they chose for their Ministers.

And this leads me to demand, how we shall do, if we cannot improve the Officers, which we may obtain, to confer holy Orders? For it sometimes happens, that, where

Officers

(a) Sanct. in Act. VIII. 4. and XI. vers. 19. 20.

(b) Lazicius in Apolog. cont. magn. Ducem Moscorum Cap. 9.

(c) Ordinando esse Domi. pro necessitate, Regenvolfe. Hist. Eccles. Slavonic. p. 30.

*Officers may be had to perform this Service, those Officers, as well as the Churches to which they belong, may be so very corrupt or wicked that it would be better not to improve them: And therefore we need not be afraid or ashamed to declare, that, if our Churches here can have no Ministers but what must be ordained by Popish Bishops, the Case appears to us as sorrowful, as if the poor Sheep in the Wilderness could have none but Wolves to appoint Shepherds over them: Blessed be God, this is not the Case with these Churches.—But let the Case be imagined, that there may be a general Combination of degenerate Pastors in a Countrey, who will be for dispensing Ordination to none but such as will partake with them in their Degeneracy or submit unto sinful Terms; where a particular Church is desirous to have all Things according to the Pattern in the Mount: Now in this Case would not the making the Imposition of Hands from such Ministers as have bin themselves ordained, to be essential to the Call of a Minister, be a Piece of foolish Bigotry, to which no sound Protestant can safely and prudently subscribe? Truly it seems to be so. And we are sure, that BEZA, in the famous Conference at Poissy, clearly and fully renounced such an ensnaring Opinion, and maintain'd, that “unto a legitimate Call
 “Imposition of Hands was not necessary; but that the
 “chief and substantial Tokens thereof were a good Life,
 “sound Doctrine and Election [from the People]. Nor
 “was it to be wondred at, if the Reformed had not received Imposition of Hands from them, whose corrupt Life, Superstition and false Doctrine they were
 “to reprove? Or how could it be expected, they should
 “ever be allowed of by them, who were Enemies to the
 “Truth which they defended”?*

And, in fine, I would enquire of the Patrons of Ordination by Officers, *whether even good and meet Officers, belonging to other Churches, may claim the Power of ordaining Elders over Churches to which they are not related? Tho' there may be very desirable Officers and*

in every Respect well qualified near at Hand; notwithstanding theless it does not appear, that even these have Authority or may assume to themselves the Power of ordaining Elders to other Churches, of which they are neither Members nor Officers; unless these particular Churches, in which the Elders are to be ordained, request their Presence and Assistance: For ordinary Officers are not like the Apostles, who might feed all the Flock of our SAVIOUR; but there is one particular Flock, of which, and of which alone, they are to take the Oversight.

If indeed it were acknowledged that we read in sundry Places of Ordination performed by Elders, tho' the Proof of this is difficult; and that we never read in the New Testament about the Performance of it by any others: This however is nothing at all against what has bin offered: For, altho' we should allow, that, in such Churches as are furnished with Elders, Ordination should be performed by those Elders; we may nevertheless with Safety maintain, that, where there are not Elders as at the first, nor any that can be conveniently borrow'd from other Churches, Ordination by the Imposition of Hands may then be validly and lawfully performed by others. And it is no more than what a famous Bishop of Salisbury, in his Exposition on the thirty nine Articles, has freely declared: For He affirms, that, whatever some boister Spirits have since thought of it; yet not only those who pen'd the Articles, but the Body of the Church for above half an Age afterward were of a Persuasion which implied, that they thought no spiritual Powers necessary for the Exercise of the Evangelical Ministry, except what the People could convey to such of their Body as they might judge qualified for it.

We may also be free and ready to grant, that Elders meeting in a Council or Synod, with Brethren, may at the Desire of a particular Church, ordain its Officers: But then, as it has bin the Judgment of these Churches in Times past, there is yet no good Reason why these Churches should change their Judgment, that the Elders

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ders so convened in Council or Synod with their Brethren for this Service, have no Power or Jurisdiction of their own, but not by vertue of the Power derived from the particular Churches which sent for them: So that, in short, particular Churches are the first Subjects of this Power of ordaining; as it is for particular Churches that Councils or Synods convene, when they meet in order to ordain Officers for them.

The very learned FABRITIUS, the Principal Doctor of Divinity in the Reformed Church of the Palatinate, whose Life is written and whose Works are published by the great HEIDEGGER at Zurich, 1698, published two Dialogues in 1685, in the latter of which he endeavours to demonstrate that the Controversy about Baptism by a private Man in Case of Necessity does not belong to the fundamental Articles of Faith, but to the Question concerning Order, it being appointed by the Divine Law that all Things should be done in order: Which principally consists in this, that every one perform the Duty belonging to his Charge: And therefore if any Man, even a Laic, be appointed by the Church to administer the Sacrament, if he does it, he does nothing but his Duty and neither offends against the Faith or against good Order. The learned FABRITIUS indeed does not lay this down as of himself; but he commends both the Ancients and Moderns who are of this Opinion. And by the same Rule he would have commended such as assert the Right of the Brethren to appoint some of their Number to confer Orders on Officers call'd and chosen by themselves; and so our generous and noble Parents would have bin applauded by him for their Opinion concerning Ordination.

As our Fathers tho't, that Ordination did not constitute an Officer nor give him the Essentials of his Office: For they judg'd, that the Essence of the outward Call of an ordinary Officer consisted, not in that, but in his free Election by the Church and his Acceptance of that Choice: So they have declared their Opinion, in the Ninth Chapter

ter of their Platform, that, in Churches where there are no Elders, Imposition of Hands on Officers elected may be performed by some of the Brethren orderly chosen by the Church for that Service: And the Reason which they there assign for this is a good one: For, say they, if the People elect Officers which is the greater, and wherein the Substance of the Office doth consist, they may much more Occasion and Need requiring, impose Hands in Ordination, which is less, and but the Accomplishment of the other. But, notwithstanding the Claim of this Right for our Churches, they go on afterwards and say, in the same Chapter, Nevertheless in Churches, where they have no Elders, and the Churches desire it, we see not why Imposition of Hands may not be performed by the Elders of other Churches.

Nor are our worthy Predecessors singular in their Sentiments. The pious and learned PERKINS, writing concerning Ordination and Succession, in his Commentary on Gal. I. ii. says, that, if in Turkey or America, or elsewhere the Gospel be received of Men, by the Counsel or Persuasion of private Persons, they should not need to send unto Europe for consecrated Ministers, but have Power to chuse their own from within themselves: And his Reason is because, where GOD gives the Word, He gives Power also. And PHILIP M. LANCTHON, the gracious and excellent, expresses himself much after the same Manner in his Answer to the Bohemian Ministers, who taught the incorrupt Doctrine of the Gospel, and refutes the Pretext of Ordination to be taken from Bishops from the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. And the Author of the valuable Scotch Dispute against English Ceremonies, freely declares, in pag. 285th, that, as, when Princes are elected, the Election gives them Jus ad Rem, as they speak, without which the Inauguration can never give them Jus in Re; so it is as to a Minister: And Ordination only applied him to the actual exercising of his Pastoral Office, which Ordination should be given to him alone that is elected,

electd, and that because he is so. And the learned VOET, in his *Desperat. Caus. Papat. L. II. Sect. II. Cap. XX*, has irrefragably proved against JANSENTUS, *Electionem tribuere Ministerium*, that it is the Choice which makes the Minister, by six or seven Arguments. Now, from these declared Sentiments of such eminent Persons, it appears very plain to me, that the Thots of our Predecessors may be clear'd from the Charge of Singularity, and with Ease be supported and justified.

Nay I cannot but think, that even Arch-Bishop BANCROFT has furnished us with a good Argument in Favour of the Opinion maintain'd by our Ancestors: For, before the Consecration of the three Scotch Bishops at London, ANDREWS the Bishop of Ely said, *They must first be ordained as having received no Ordination by a Bishop: But BANCROFT maintain'd, that there was no Necessity for it, seeing, where Bishops could not be had, the Ordination given by Presbyters must be valid and esteemed lawful: For otherwise it might be doubted, if there was any lawful Vocation in most of the Reformed Churches.* Now, by the same Argument of BANCROFT's, (which is to be found in SPOTSWOOD's Hist. l. 7. p. 514.) there will be no Difficulty in maintaining the Validity and Lawfulness of Ordination by the People: For, where Bishops or Presbyters cannot be had, Ordinations by them must be valid and esteemed lawful: Otherwise it may be doubted whether there be any lawful Vocation in many, if not most, of the Reformed Churches.

Wherefore I cannot but say with the celebrated Mr. CLAUDE, that the fierce Opinion that goes so high as to own no Ministry in the World, but where there are Episcopal Ordinations, and which would make all Religion depend on a disputable Formality; that Opinion can't be look'd upon any otherwise than the very worst Character and the grossest Mark of Hypocrisy and worthy of Contempt from all the Christians in the World. But what he has thus strongly, but justly, expressed concerning the

the hot Opinion about the *Necessity of Episcopal Ordinations*; I would say and maintain the very same concerning the Opinion about the *Necessity of Ordination* by a Presbytery, as well as a Bishop: And it will give me very little Uneasiness, however vex'd and angry or troubled any may be with me for being of this Mind and freely declaring it: For I am satisfied, that their Trouble or Anger must arise either from groundless Fancies or something worse: So that I cannot have any Reason to be disturb'd or uneasy at it.

But, after all, some will challenge us to produce any *Texts of Scripture that give Laymen a Right to ordain Ministers in any Case*. And, as this is the Challenge which the Author of *The Prejudices, &c.* made to the famous Mr. CLAUDE, I shall recite his Reply to it, which to me appears a full and sufficient one: It is to be found in his *Defence of the Reformation*, P. IV. p. 94 and 95.

“ This Demand, says he, is but a vain Wrangling:
 “ For, when the Scripture recommends to the Faithful
 “ the taking diligent heed to the Preservation and Con-
 “ firmation of their Faith and to propagate it to their
 “ Children; it gives them by that very Thing a suffi-
 “ cient *Right to make Use of all proper Means to that*
 “ *End*: And every Body knows the Ministry is one
 “ of those Means: And therefore the Obligation the
 “ Faithful are under to preserve and propagate the
 “ Faith includes *that of creating to themselves Pastors*
 “ when they cannot have them otherwise: In short,
 “ when the Scripture teaches, that the Faithful have a
 “ Right to chuse their Pastors, it teaches thereby that
 “ they have a Right to install them in their Office in
 “ Case of Necessity: For that *Call consisting much more*
 “ *essentially in Election than in Installation*, which is but
 “ a Formality, there is no Reason to believe, that God
 “ would have given the People a Right to chuse their
 “ Pastors and to have them installed by others, and
 “ that He has not given them at the same Time a
 “ Power

“ *Power of installing them themselves, when it cannot be done otherwise. Since naturally That, which we have a Right to do by another, we have a Right to do by ourselves*”. Thus he.

Nay, not only the celebrated CLAUDE, but the learned DODWEL, that mighty Oracle of the distracted, high-flying Clergy, *acknowledges such a Right in particular Societies of chusing and investing their Officers*. 'Tis true this is not at all reconcileable with the other Parts of his [Romantic] Scheme: But this is nothing to us. It is in his *Separation of Churches*, [P. 102 and 52.] that he writes after this Manner; “ The Church, with whom God has made the Covenant, is a *Body Politic*, tho’ not a *Civil* one; and God has design’d all Persons to enter into this Society.—It is sufficient for my Purpose, that the *Ecclesiastical Power* be no otherwise from God, than that is of every *supreme Civil Magistrate*. It is not usual for *Kings* to be invested into their Offices by *other Kings*, but by their *Subjects*: Yet, when they are *invested*, that doth not in the least prejudice the Absoluteness of their *Monarchy*, where the Fundamental Constitutions of the respective Places allow it to them.—And (in Pag. 522 and 523) he says, “ Whenever a Person is invested with the supreme Power, and the Society over which he is placed is independent on other Societies, such a Person can never be placed in his Power, if not by *them who must after be his Subjects*, unless by his *Predecessor*, which no Society can depend upon for a constant Rule of Succession.—I am apt to think, this must have bin the Way of making Bishops at first, how absolute soever I conceive them to be when they are once made.—This seems best to agree with the *Absoluteness of particular Churches*, before they had by *Compact* united themselves under *Metropolitans* and *Exarchs* into *Provincial* and *Diocesan Churches*. And this seems to have bin fitted for the frequent Persecutions of those earlier Ages, when

“every Church was able to secure its own Succession,
 “without depending on the uncertain Opportunities of
 “the meeting of the Bishops of the whole Province:
 “And the Alterations of this Practice, the giving of
 “the Bishops of the Province an Interest in the Choice
 “of every particular Colleague, seems not to have bin so
 “much for want of Power in the particular Churches to
 “do it, as for the Security of Compacts, that they might
 “be certain of such a Colleague as would observe
 “them. — It is probable, that it was in Imitation of
 “the Philosophers Successions, that these Ecclesiastical
 “Successions were framed: And, when the Philoso-
 “phers fail’d to nominate their own Successors, the
 “Election was in the Schools”. Now, granting these
 Things, we have all that we desire: For, if every par-
 ticular Church has originally a Power within itself to chuse
 and invest its Bishop, and the Concurrence of other Bishops
 herein be not for want of Power in particular Churches,
 but only for the securing an [uncertain] Agreement of
 [arbitrary and troublesome] Bishops among themselves;
 then certainly all particular Churches, according to the
 common Principles of all Societies, have a latent Power
 of electing and investing their Officers; altho’, by the
 Laws of the Community, or thro’ Custom they may
 consign the Exercise of this Power to a particular Order
 of Men amongst them. — And with this we are satis-
 fied.

But I have not yet exhausted my Stock: I have other
 Testimonies to produce in Confirmation of the Senti-
 ments of those who founded these Churches.

A very valuable and ingenious Scotchman, whose
 Name is ALEXANDER LAUDER in his *Ancient*
Bishops considered has these Passages; “The People
 “had an inherent Right to separate from the Bishops at
 “the Reformation; because the Communion of the
 “Bishops was then Idolatrous, and so polluted that it
 “could not be continued in without manifest Hazard. —
 “Then they had also an inherent Right to set up another

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" Communion, distinct from the polluted and hazardous
 " Communion of these Bishops, or *set up new Assem-*
 " *blies*: For their Souls would have bin in Hazard, if
 " they had *lived separately* and had not set up new
 " Communions or Assemblies, thro' want of Sacra-
 " ments and other Means of Grace or Access to wor-
 " ship God in a public Way.— There is no Right
 " more authentic than that which is founded on *indis-*
 " *pensable Necessity*: In that Case God has not only
 " given People a *Right* to do the Thing, but has *laid*
 " *an Obligation* upon them to do it.— The People had
 " *also an inherent Right* to *set up new Bishops and Pres-*
 " *byters* to themselves;— supposing that not one or-
 " dained Person had joined with them in their Separation,
 " and that all the Bishops and Presbyters without
 " Exception had adher'd unto the Pope and the Roman
 " Church.— What Probability is there, that CHRIST
 " would refuse to give His People a Right or Power
 " to do what was needful for them; contrary to His
 " expresse Promise, that He *will give Grace and Glory*
 " *and withhold no good Thing from them that walk up-*
 " *rightly*?— Bishops and Presbyters after their Separation
 " were necessary for them: They could not enjoy
 " the Ordinances of the Gospel without them.— It must
 " be said, either that CHRIST gave them a *Right* to
 " *create Bishops and Presbyters to themselves or obliged to*
 " *have Recourse to the Church of Rome for them.*— To
 " suppose that is ridiculous and monstrous, yea it is a
 " *Blasphemy*, and a Reflection upon the Wisdom of
 " God Almighty: For, according to this Supposition,
 " He laid it on them as a *Duty to separate* from the idolatrous
 " *Popish Communion and erect distinct Churches to*
 " *no Purpose at all, and to bring them into as great or*
 " *greater Difficulties* than they would have bin in if
 " they had continued in the Idolatrous Popish Com-
 " *munion*". — And the same worthy Writer, quoting
 " an Order of a Council at Rome, that *the Bishop to be*
 " *consecrated be chosen by all the Church*, and an Order of
 " another

another Council at *Clermont* to the same Purpose, makes this agreeable Reflection in the Margin; "Hence it is evident, that Persons are constituted or made Bishops by the Election of the People, and not by Ordination which is performed by Bishops: One is made or constituted a Bishop by that, by which he is advanced to the high Dignity of the Ministry: But, according to these Councils, the Suffrage of the People is the Thing, and not an Ordination, that advances one to the high Dignity of the Ministry: This is also evident from Canon XXII. of the Council of *Constantinople*: For in it the Election and Promotion of a Bishop are one Thing". Thus he.

And the worthy Mr. SIMON BROWNE, in an Ordination-Sermon preached not long since by him, found himself obliged to give into such Sentiments as these; "Neither Ordination by Bishops nor by other Ministers is absolutely necessary to the Being of the Ministry. A Person may be a Minister without Ordination by other Ministers. This Power is not given, but acknowledged and declared in Ordination. And yet in many Cases a Man may be obliged to the Work when he cannot be ordained: And, where that Obligation is notorious and plain, there is a sufficient and valid Declaration of his Ministerial Power or of the Will of CHRIST that he should act in his Office. If a Company of Christians were Shipwreck'd on a remote and unknown Shore, to which they were incapable of fetching ordained Ministers from any other Place; I think a Man must be out of his Wits to assert, that this Body of Men must live like Heathens, and not openly own CHRIST by performing all common Christian Exercises in public Assemblies for want of an ordained Minister. Without Doubt he, who was the most capable among them to teach the rest and perform the other Duties of a Minister, was bound in Conscience to undertake that Work, and, if obliged to do the Work of a Minister, he had certainly

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" Authority from CHRIST to be a Minister, unless
 " we make CHRIST's Commands contradictory, and
 " say, A Man was *obliged in Duty to do that, which*
 " *when done would be unlawful* and a Sin for want of
 " sufficient Authority. The like may be said, if Mi-
 " nisters or Bishops refuse Ordination to qualified Men,
 " unless they will submit unto unlawful Terms, and no
 " other Ministers can be procured to do the Work;
 " which was the Case of several of the first Reformers:
 " In these and all such like Cases Ceremonies must be
 " waved, whilst a due Regard is had unto what is chief
 " and principal".

Nor may I leave the Judgment of the uncommonly
 learned VOET untranscribed, as he has left it, in his
Desperat. Caus. Papatus. L. II. Sect. II. Cap. XXI.
 in Answer to JANSENIUS, where he says as follows,
 " The Succession and Calling of Pastors can and ought
 " to be repaired by the Church, that is to say, by the
 " Society or Company of the Faithful, tho' they be alto-
 " gether destitute of Bishops and Presbyters: For every
 " Church has essentially and properly the Power of
 " Calling, tho' it may put over some Acts of that Calling
 " to some other Persons: For, as the Pope is created
 " and consecrated by those who are not Popes, and as
 " the High Priest in the Old Testament was consecrated
 " by his Inferior; so a Bishop may be proclaimed, con-
 " stituted and endowed with Ministerial Power by a
 " Presbyter, and a Presbyter by any Member of the
 " Church, that is peculiarly delegated to that Service
 " by the Suffrages of his Brethren. And indeed what
 " should hinder that the formal Solemnity of Conse-
 " cration may not in such a necessitous Case be laid
 " aside, and that he who is lawfully chosen may not
 " without it perform the Business of his Ministry?
 " Truly there is nothing at all, that from the Divine
 " Right of such Formalities can shew them to be a
 " necessary Mean". And in the same Chapter He has
 many other Passages to the same Purpose. Wherefore

I cannot but fall into the same Declaration with him, in the fifth Part of his *Select Disputations*, *De Eccles.* P. 384. Our Belgian Churches, as also the French Churches and others are true Churches and indeed pure, yea and integral; tho' they want Bishops as at this Day called: And their Ministers are true Ministers, truly and lawfully called; tho' they neither have that pretended Episcopal Ordination, nor would have it or care at all for it. These Citations, as well as the foregoing ones, are of great Weight and Importance, not only on the Account of the Character and Quality of the Writers, which with many may go pretty far; but also because, let their Character and Quality be what it will, their Arguments are well supported and confirmed.

And well may Protestants speak and write, as I have rehearsed, when even Father PAUL, in his Treatise of *Beneficiary Matters*, says expressly, "Pope LEO shews it amply, that the Ordination of a Bishop could not be lawful or valid, which was not required by the People and approved by them; which is said by all the Saints of those Times: And St. GREGORY thought CONSTANCE could not be consecrated Bishop of Milan, being elected by the Clergy, without the Consent of the Citizens, who by Reason of Persecution retired to Genoa; and He prevail'd that they should be first sent unto to know their Will. A Thing worthy to be noted, continues He, in our Days, when that Election is declared to be illegitimate and null, in which the People have any Share". Thus that *rara Avis* in the Romish Communion.

Thus I have shewn the Opinion of our discerning Predecessors concerning Ordination, and recited various Arguments and Authorities by which their Opinion may be defended and justified: And I am sure, that however amiss any may think of their Opinion on any other Accounts, they can have no Reason to blame them for being alone and singular in it: For there has bin a mix'd Company introduced of the very same Opinion with them.

It is needless to confirm these Things from the ancient Writers: One CYPRIAN is enow for our Purpose, whom we have all reason to believe in a *Matter of Fact*, altho' his Authority may not go very far with us: For he, speaking of Ordination by the Suffrage of the whole Brotherhood of the Church, is so free as to declare upon it, that (d), according to Divine Tradition and Apostolical Practice, this Custom is to be diligently kept and preserved among us, as it is throughout all the Provinces almost: And his Testimony is so clear concerning this Matter, that it would be superfluous to mention any other, *de universa Fraternitatis Suffragio*, concerning the Right of the Fraternity to give their Suffrages in all Ordinations.

Instead therefore of producing any other Citations in Confirmation of the Remarks which have bin made; I shall write in the Style of the foremention'd Author concerning Ordinations, *Let those Ordinations be still accounted lawful and just which pass the Suffrage and Judgment of all* (e); adding the Remark of ORIGEN, in his Sixth Homily upon *Leviticus* (f); Tho', says he, the LORD had commanded concerning the Consecration of the Priest and had chosen him; yet the People and even all the Congregation was gathered together on that Occasion: For in the Ordination of a Priest the Presence of the People is required that they may all know and be certified, &c. and that afterwards there may be no Retraction and Scruple: From which Words SIXTUS SENENSIS, a learned Roman Catholic Writer, acknowledges, that ORIGEN seems to allow the People some

(d) *Diligenter de Traditione Divina. & Apostolica Observatione servandum est & tenendum apud nos quoque, ut fere per universas Provincias tenetur.* Cyprian. Epist. 68.

(e) *Sic Ordinatio ista justa et legitima, qua omnium Suffragiis & Judicio fuerit examinata.* Eiusd. Epist. 68.

(f) *Requisitur enim in ordinando Sacerdote & Prasentia Populi, ut omnes sciant & certi sint. — Et hoc astante Populo, ne qua postmodum Retractatio cuiquam, ne quis Scrupulus residere.* vid. Origen. Homil. 6. in Levit.

Authority in the Choice of their Bishops (g), tho' he afterwards endeavours to prove the contrary. But we have, to our Comfort, the Testimony of the Abbot FLEURY, another learned Roman Catholic Writer, in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History, that the People were consulted in Things wherein they were any Ways concerned, as in Ordinations: And of this, writes he, we have Instances in CYPRIAN; and the very Form of ordaining still makes it appear. vid. Pont. Rom. Hist. L. XXIV. N. 40.



Chap. III.



(g) *Sint. Senens. Biblioth. Sanct. l. V. p. 465.*

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Chapter III.

The Right of these Churches to send forth their Elders and other Delegates upon proper Occasions, and to call them to an Account upon their Return maintained.

AS Churches cannot with Convenience repair to distant Places upon recurring Occasions; it is for this Reason requisite and necessary, that on such Occasions they should use the *vicarious Help of others*. And, as every particular Church, that hath Elders and other Members adorned with mental and gracious Qualifications fitting them for public Service, hath an undoubted Right to improve and make Use of them in the best Manner and on the best Occasions; so, if the Honour of our blessed Lord and the Welfare of any of the Churches require it, they have then the Liberty of instructing and sending forth their Elders and other Delegates.

Thus it was unquestionably in ancient Times: For the Brethren of the Church at *Antioch* determined that PAUL and BARNABAS and certain others should go up to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles, Elders and Brethren there. And the *Philippians* sent forth the worthy EPAPHRODITUS to the Apostle PAUL with a Present; for this is the meaning of their Fellowship in the Gospel, for which the Apostle thanks GOD, in Phil. I. 5 and 6 Verses. It means their contributing or communicating to his Support while he was in Bonds to make

Apology for the Gospel before that roaring Lion NERO; And it appears from Chap. II. Vers. 25th of that Epistle, that EPAPHRODITUS was *their Messenger*; who also in Return was to act in our Apostle's Behalf and discharge his Office to the *Philippians*: For this is the Sense of the Verse, *your Apostle or Messenger and the Performer of my Office towards you (h)*, as a very ingenious Man has justly expressed it. And we read of one, whose Praise was in the Gospel throughout all the Churches, that was chosen by the Churches to travel with our Apostle on a charitable Occasion, in 2 Cor. VIII. 18 and 19.

And, that the Churches continued afterwards to claim this Right, it will abundantly appear from CLEMENT's first Epistle to the *Corinthians*: For this Epistle, which weareth his honourable Name, was sent by the Church of Rome unto the *Corinthians* by CLAUDIUS, EPHEBUS, VALERIUS, BIBO, FORTUNATUS, who were *their Apostles (i)* or Messengers to the Church at Corinth: And these Persons, you must know, were *not Officers* in the Church at that Time, nor appear to be mention'd at all under that Character; but they were *prudent and fit Members* of that Christian Community to be sent with this Epistle and act in Behalf of the Church of ROME: It follows therefore, that, as *this Letter* was sent by the Church and *these Messengers* were appointed and dispatch'd in the Name of the Church with it, the Church must be heartily consenting unto the sending of the Letter and the Messengers; and that therefore the Church must meet together; for, without this, how could they consent to the sending Letter or Messengers to the Church of the *Corinthians*?

Particular Churches then are possess'd of this Right and Privilege of appointing and sending forth Elders and other Delegates on suitable Occasions: And by the same

(h) *Vestrum autem Apostolum & mei muneris vicarium. Cassellio*

(i) *vid. Clement. Epist. ad Corinth.*

same Reason they may *call them to an Account at their Return* : And, if upon Enquiry it shall be found, that they have done any Thing prejudicial to the Truth and Peace of the Gospel, they may justly *expostulate* with them and ask the Reasons of their Conduct and refuse to regard what they have bin doing.

Nor indeed can any Thing be more fit and suitable than this, that the Messengers of particular Churches, who have *done amiss*, or *by under the Suspicion* of irregular Conduct and a faulty Management of their Affairs, should be questioned by the Churches, whose Messengers they are, and in whose Service they are employ'd.

And as this is *fit and suitable in itself*, that the Brethren in particular Churches should call their Delegates to an Account for their Management in their Service, there is also an *Instance* to be given from *the Scripture*, which will sufficiently justify the Brethren in the Use of this Liberty : It is in Act. XI. 2 and 3 Verses, where we read, that, *when PETER was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the Circumcision* contended with him, or rather *call'd him to an Account* in order to pass their Judgment ; saying, *Thou wentest in to Men uncircumcised and didst eat with them* : And it follows in the next Verse, that *PETER rehearsed from the Beginning, and expounded by Order unto them.*

Now, if the Brethren might demand of an Apostle the Reasons of his Behaviour, and if the Apostle tho't himself accountable to them and therefore oblig'd to apologize for his Conduct before them ; the Conclusion is strong and irresistible, that now *the Brethren have the Liberty much more* to enquire concerning the Managements of their Elders and other Delegates whom they improve, and to require Satisfaction of them concerning any Breaches of Rule into which they may be betray'd ; and *Elders and other Messengers are now much more obliged* to render them an Account and satisfy them, when they properly and honestly demand that they

they should do so: And the Reason is plain: For no Persons have any Right to consult, vote or act in behalf of any particular Church but by virtue of a Delegation from that Church: It is *this* alone that empowers them: And, if without such empowering, any shall pretend to act as their Delegates, they must be deemed *busy Bodies in other Men's Matters*: And, since these Things are so, surely particular Churches may appoint whom they please to any Trust or Service, and may challenge an Account of their Stewardship and Managements for them.

But supposing, as it is a supposeable Case, that any Delegates from particular Churches upon emergent Occasions should substitute others in their Room, and so should not be able to give any Account of their Transactions? I answer, That, altho' the Case may be supposed, yet the Thing ought not to be: For none in such Cases have the Power of substituting others in their Room and Stead; any more than an Ambassador from one Prince or Commonwealth to another Prince or Commonwealth hath the Power of substituting whom he pleases to perform the Embassy for him (j). 'Tis true the Romish Bishops did not appear in some of their General Councils and other Councils, but sent Messengers or Vicars in their Room to them: But it is very evident, as that such a Method was *disorderly*, so that there was always some vile Design to carry on, and some peculiar Stratagem to be forwarded by it. And surely the Churches, if they are ever thus imposed on by such Substitutions, should animadvert upon those that devolve the Trusts reposed in them upon others, and ought not to mind what those, who were not appointed by them, transact and agree to on their Behalf.

Animated by such Considerations as these, some of the ancient Fathers were not at all backward, but very forward and ready to submit to the Brethren: Nay some

(j) Voet. Polit. Eccles. Par. III. lib. I. Tract. III. Cap. IX.

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of them were so fond of making them satisfied and easy, that they were ready almost to comply with any Thing. The angry old EPIPHANIUS, writing against the *Carpocratians*, informs us, that, altho' CLEMENT was ordained by PETER, yet he refused the Bishoprick of Rome as long as LINUS and CLETUS were living; and then he gives us the Reason of that his Refusal: For, continues EPIPHANIUS, he says in one of his Epistles, *I depart, I go my Ways: Only let the People of GOD have Rest and Quietness* (k): But, if EPIPHANIUS means the first Epistle of CLEMENT here, it must be confessed that this Passage is there, but it is used in another Sense: For CLEMENT, in this Epistle to the *Corinthians*, is advising them upon the Rise of Troubles and Contentions in the Church to speak in such a Manner, *Is there any one*, says he, *that is of a noble Spirit among you? Is there any one that is compassionate? Doth any one abound in Charity? Let him say, if this Sedition or Contention or Schism be for me or by my Means, I will depart, I will go my Ways whithersoever you please, I will do what the Multitude commands: Only let the Sheepfold of CHRIST enjoy Peace* (l). This is the Advice of the good CLEMENT in that Epistle; and, altho' it be directed to the Brethren in *Corinth*, or to such as might be in Office, on whose Account there was a Disturbance and Contention in the Church; we may however very well suppose, that he would himself have followed it rather than have continued with his People when they were dissatisfied and uneasy with him. And CHRYSOSTOM has a Passage, which some conjecture that he used with reference to the Clauses that have bin recited out of CLEMENT, *If*, says he to his People, *you conceive or suspect these Things of us, we are ready to depart and deliver up our Power to whomsoever ye please: Only let the Church*

(k) Epiphan. L. I. Hæres. 27.

(l) Clement. Epist. I. ad Corinth.

Church be at Unity within itself (m). AUGUSTIN has some where well observed, *we are Christians for our selves and Bishops for you :* And it seems to be his Judgment, that *the End of every Government in general is the Good of the Persons governed, and not of him who governs.* And GREGORY NAZIANZEN openly professed at Constantinople, that, altho' he were innocent and free from Blame, yet he could depart or be cast out rather than they should have Contention among them (n): *And he did so accordingly (o).* The first Synod indeed of Ephesus, in the Case of the aged EUSTATHIUS, condemned him for renouncing his Office upon his own Judgment and without seeking Advice: And probably he was to blame in that Affair: But a Synod, convened under PHOTIUS at Constantinople, declared that such a Departure was in some Cases lawful (p).

Upon the whole; It would be an happy Thing for the Churches of CHRIST, if all their Elders and all their Messengers which they improve were of such a Christian Temper. But, if there be any who are not of this Temper, the Churches, which are unhappily possess'd of them, would do well to watch over them and strictly enquire into their Managements on their Behalf, lest they should abuse the Trust reposed in them and subvert their fundamental Rights and Privileges; and the greater any one is or seems to be, whom they employ, they should be the more careful of him lest the Church should be troubled by him and annoyed by his superior and excelling Gifts. It is very reasonable, and the learned Abbot FLEURY, in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History, says it ought to be so, that in every Society the Interest of each particular Person, even of him who governs, should give Place to that of the whole Body. Wherefore let these Churches be sensible of their Inter-

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(m) Chrysostom. Homil. II. ad Ephes.

(n) Gregor. Nazianzen. Orat. 52.

(o) Gregor. Nazianzen. vit.

(p) Synod, Constantinopol. Canon. 8.

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rest and take Care of it, nor suffer that of any particular Persons to prevail and triumph over it.



Chapter IV.

The Liberty of these Churches to *depose and withdraw from their Elders*, when they are guilty of Male-Administration, defended.

IT has bin asserted and proved, that *Elders*, as well other Delegates, are accountable to the particular Churches who employ them: But some may probably here enquire, *Supposing the Elders of a particular Church should be guilty of Male-Administration, what is then to be done? Has not your Platform given to the Elderhip the Power of calling the Church together, and allowed them to permit Speech or command Silence in the Church? How then can the Church come at them? And after what Manner should they testify their Dislike of their Proceedings?*

I answer, as our wise and pious Fathers have already answered, that, altho' Church-Government or Rule be placed by CHRIST JESUS our LORD in the Officers of the Church, who therefore may be called Rulers while they rule with GOD; yet, in Case of Male-Administration, they are subject to the Power of the Church (q): And, if it shall appear to the Church that an Elder
bath

(q) Platform of Church Discipline. Chap. X. Sect. 7.

both offended incorrigibly, they have Power according to Order (the Counsel of other Churches where it may be had directing to it) to remove him from his Office; and being now but a Member, in Case he should add Contumacy to his Sin, the Church, that had Power to receive him into their Fellowship, hath Power also to cast him out as any other Member (r): So that, as the Church puts forth a twofold Act in receiving a Pastor into Membership and in chusing him to Office, they may also by Parity of Reason put forth a twofold Act in removing him from his Office and from his Membership. Some imagine, that there are two distinct Cases mentioned in these two Sections of the Platform, that in the former Case a Plurality of Rulers in a Church is supposed, who are guilty of Male-Administration, and that in the latter it is supposed that a particular Elder is guilty of an Offence and incorrigible under it: And it is very probable, that they are in the Right: But I have put the Passages together; concluding, as I think rightly, that, *if a Plurality of Elders in a Church be subject to the Power of the Church in Case of Male-Administration, doubtless a particular offending and incorrigible Elder must be much more subject to their Power: And, if Counsel from other Churches be not requisite in the former Case, much less in the latter: But, if it be requisite or convenient in the latter Case, why should it not be in the former also?* So that, upon these Accounts, I may very consistently blend the sixth and seventh Paragraphs recited from the Platform together.

That the Power of the Church extends to the *Deposition of their Elders*,— This seems to be a pretty manifest Case: For, *if the Church have Power to chuse their Officers and Ministers; then, in Case of manifest Unworthiness and Delinquency, they have Power also to depose them: For to open and shut, to chuse and refuse, to constitute in Office and remove from Office are Acts be-*

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(r) Platform. Chap. X, Sect. 6.

longing to the same Power, as our judicious Ancestors rightly argue in their Platform (f) of Church-Discipline.

And it is entirely just and reasonable, that particular Churches should have this Power: For they are Ecclesiastical Societies confederate, that is to say, they are Churches, before they have Officers and even without them: And, altho' they may be in such a State as this, yet even then a subordinate Ecclesiastical Power is under our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and by HIM delegated unto them: So that, having the Nature and Essence of a Church as they surely have, they may act as such: And, as it is natural to all Societies and Bodies whatsoever to preserve themselves, the Churches of CHRIST also are doubtless furnished with sufficient Power for their own Preservation and comfortable Subsistence (t). It follows therefore, that, if the Elder of a particular Church should be found guilty of Male-Administration and break in upon the known and fundamental Privileges which every Christian Society has in common with other Societies, that particular Church may and ought, from a sacred Regard to the Law of Self-Preservation, to depose such an arbitrary and tyrannical Elder, if upon their Admonitions he do not repent and give them Satisfaction.

Nor indeed can it well be disputed, that the Churches in the Days of primitive Christianity were possessed of this most valuable Right and Privilege; when there are such Testimonies in the ancient approved Writers, which fully demonstrate it.

It is as clear as the Light from that deservedly priz'd Remain of Antiquity, CLEMENT's first Epistle to the Corinthians, which is worthy of frequent Citations from it, that the Church of Corinth at that Time had and exercised this Privilege: For, he says to them in that

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Epistle;

(f) Platform. Chap. VIII. S. 7.

(t) Ejusd. Chap. X. S. 2.

Epistle, *We perceive that ye have removed some, who have performed their Office well, from the Ministry which they were thought to deserve, as having no Fault to be found with them: Ye are too contentious, Brethren, and too hot about these Things which appertain not to Salvation (u):* Now is it not very plain from these Passages, that the Corinthians had deposed and laid aside their Ministers, merely because in lesser or disputable Points their Judgments did not please them? 'Tis true the good CLEMENT blames them, and it must be confessed that they deserved to be blamed, for casting off those Persons, who had holily and unblameably perform'd the Duties of their Episcopacy: But CLEMENT never twits or blames them at all for exercising a Power which did not belong unto them: No, far from it: All that he faults them for, and indeed all that can be objected against them, is, that *they exercised the Power, of which they were possessed, in an irregular Manner, when the Occasion did not require it.*

And it is also certain, that the particular Churches of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, enjoy'd this Privilege, at least until the *two hundred and fifty eighth Year* after CHRIST: For, in that Year, a Synod convened, in which CYPRIAN presided: And that Synod approv'd and commended the Proceedings of some Churches, who had deposed their Bishops, upon the Application of those Churches to the Synod in order to obtain their Opinion concerning their Conduct.

As for CYPRIAN's own Judgment in this Matter, it may easily be seen by reading some of his Epistles: For, in one of his Epistles, he expressly acknowledges, that in his Time *the People had the Power, as of abusing worthy Ministers, so likewise of refusing and casting off those who were not so (v):* and in another Epistle, he affirms,

(u) vid. Clement. Epist. I, ad Corinth.

(v) Cyprian. Epist. 4.

affirms, that this Power belongs to the Church, and that it was given to the Church by Divine Authority (w).

And the learned ORIGEN was of the same Mind; For he freely declar'd to his People, *If I seem to you to be a right Hand, and am call'd a Presbyter and seem to preach the Word of GOD; yet, if I shall do any Thing contrary to Ecclesiastical Discipline and the Rule of the Gospel, so that I give Scandal or Offence to the Church, let the whole Church conspire and with one Consent cut me off, altho' I am their Right Hand* (x).

But, if for the sake of Peace it should be granted, that this Power is too great for the Brethren, and that they have not sufficient Authority for it; may we not then say, that they may withdraw from their Male-administring Elders, and that there cannot be any reasonable Objection against such a Withdraw from them? Truly we may well say this, and it may very well be granted us; For, as every particular Church sets up their Presbytery by professing their Subjection to them in the LORD; even so, when they walk disorderly in their Office and are chargeable with Male-Administration in it, then they may avoid them and professedly withdraw their Subjection to them: So that, if according to the Opinion of some, the Brethren should not have the Power of deposing their Elders; yet, if they have the Power and Liberty of withdrawing from them on requisite Occasions, which cannot be denied them, they have what is tantamount to the Deposing Power, at least with respect to themselves.

And, that the Churches have this Power and Liberty, we may safely argue from our Apostle's Instruction to the Church of Rome, in Rom. XVI. 17, where he beseeches them to mark such as cause Divisions, — and avoid them, or withdraw from them; For, our Apostle, foreseeing by the Holy SPIRIT enlightning him, the

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(w) Cyprian. Epist. 68.

(x) Origen, in Joh. Cap. VII.

last Occasion of giving this Counsel to the Church at Rome, therefore affectionately and faithfully gave it, and entreated that Church to make Use of this Liberty, as there should be Occasion for so doing: And it is a just Observation of ALARDUS upon the Text, that the Word which we render here *mark* is a Military Term deriv'd from the *Speculatores* or Centinels upon a Watch-Tower, who are constantly to mind and observe and tell the Motions of an Enemy: So that the Romans are entreated, after their Example, to take special Notice of their Elders in their Administrations, and properly to withdraw from such of them as cause Divisions and Offences.

And this Right and Liberty of the Brethren, for which we plead, is so fully represented by CYPRIAN, and so strongly proved to belong to them from Passages which he urges out of the old and new Testament that I shall refer you unto him (y): In the mean Time I cannot but transcribe a few Sentences from him; For this Cause, says he, the People obedient to the Commands of the LORD and fearing GOD ought to separate themselves from a wicked Bishop: For they principally have the Power of choosing worthy Priests and rejecting the unworthy, which comes from Divine Authority (z). Nor may I omit the Testimony of the prodigiously learned GROTIUS with reference to this Right of the People in the early Ages of Christianity; Now, he testifies, that it was not only the Right of the People to flee and avoid an unfaithful Pastor, but that such a Pastor by vertue of the Sentence against him lost his Pastoral Right and whatsoever of that Kind was once ascribed unto him (c).

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(y) vid. Cyprian. Epist. 68.

(z) *Populi quod Plebs obsequens Preceptis Dominicis Et Deum metuens a Peccatore Proposito separare se debet, quando ipsa maxime habet Potestatem vel eligendi dignos Sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi: Quod Et ipsum videmus de Divina Autoritate descendere.* Cyprian. Epist. 68.

(c) *Neque tantum Pastorem infidum fugere Plebs Jus erat, sed*

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To conclude; As **JESUS CHRIST** has made these Churches free in this Liberty; it is to be hoped, that they will stand fast in it and exercise it, as Occasion shall require, nor suffer their Pastors under their Malign Administrations to deprive them of it.

Chapter V.

The Privilege of these Churches to except against such Persons as are disqualified for Communion among them, vindicated.

IN our Opinion the composing Churches of Habitual Sinners, and that either with respect to Sins of Omission or Commission, instead of erecting Temples to the Honour of GOD and the Redeemer, would be only the setting up Synagogues of Satan and Chappels to the Devil.

These Churches indeed are far from denying the Communion unto any Person whatsoever, whose Duty it may be to ask the Favour of enjoying it: Nor do we oppose the Right and Interest of any baptized Person in our Churches; but, conformably to the universal Practice

Pastor talis vi Sententia in ipsum prolata Jus Pastorale, & quicquid illi ascribatur, amittebat. Gros. De Imper. Sum. Potest. Ciro. Sacra. p. 251.

ties of the primitive Churches after the Decease of the Apostles, we advise them to such Methods as will qualify them for a Reception to the Glory of *CHRIST*, and to partake of Divine Ordinances to their own spiritual Edification.

The Things, which we judge requisite, absolutely requisite, in all those that would enjoy the Communion in these Churches, are *Repentance towards GOD, and Faith towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and a fixed Resolution to lead a Life of Piety and Vertue*: And we think, that such as are sincere in these Things, altho' they should be but weak Christians, but *Babes in CHRIST* (&), may not nevertheless be excluded nor yet discouraged from attending the Communion with us in our Churches.

But however we expect, and we may well expect, that all, who are sincere in these Things and are desirous of Communion in these Churches, should make *Profession of their Faith and Repentance and Resolutions for a good Life*: And we protest, that we cannot admit any into full Communion and an actual Participation in all the Privileges of our Churches, without such a *Profession*, and unless this *Profession* be recommended by a moral and Christian Conduct: For, without such a *Profession*, and such a corresponding Conduct, there is no Person, that manifests himself meet and qualified for obtaining an Interest in the Privileges of any pure Society of Christians.

These Churches therefore may lawfully require the making such a *Profession* and that it should be adorned in the Conduct of those that expect Communion with them:

(&) I have heard or read somewhere, that my great Grandfather, the holy and learned Mr. COTTON, once said to his Congregation, that, if any Person, tho' a poor Indian should step forth and say, I love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in Sincerity and Truth, and should testify his Willingness to walk according to the Gospel, tho' his Defects were great for Ignorance and the like, He should be for admitting him to the LORD's Table;

them: Nay they ought peremptorily to insist upon these Things: For particular Churches will never preserve or recover their brightest Glory, unless they are careful as to these Matters.

And, as particular Churches may and should demand the witnessing of a good Confession from those that offer themselves to their Communion; so it is reasonable and proper, that the Candidates for Communion should comply with the Demand: For, as is well observed in one of the Homilies of the Church of England for Whitsunday, If any Man be a dumb Christian, not professing his Faith openly, but cloaking and colouring himself for Fear of Danger, he giveth Men Occasion justly and with good Conscience to doubt, lest he have not the Grace of the HOLY GHOST within him, because he is Tongue-tied and doth not speak.

I cannot tell, whether in any of the Reformed Churches abroad such an open Profession of Christianity before the Church be required of the Candidates for Communion: But this I know that the very learned, judicious, pious and modest WITSIUS of Utrecht, has wished the Custom to prevail in their Churches (a), that such as are admitted to the holy Communion should publicly in the Light and Audience of the whole Church profess the LORD; which, adds he, such as refuse to do, either before an Assembly, or a Pastor in private, making I know not what Excuses, I would admonish them again and again to consider what our LORD has pronounced concerning them who are ashamed of Him and His Sayings.

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(a) Optandum foret idem nostris quoque in Ecclesiis in usu esse, vel saltem ut ii, qui ad sacram admittuntur Synaxim, publice etiam, inspectante & audiente tota Ecclesia, profiterentur Dominum; quod qui vel coram Synedrio vel coram Pastore privatim facere veniunt, nescio quid causificantes, Eos monitos volo etiam atque etiam cogitent, quid Dominus de iis pronunciat, quos sui ac Sermonum suorum puduerit. *Whist. in Symb. Exercit. III. De Fide Salvific.*

Some, we are sensible, in the present Times of Degeneracy and Corruption are bitter Enemies to the Churches having and exercising this Privilege, and plead that the *Elders* of the Churches only are possess'd of this Right and they only should improve it.

But, when the *Brethren* of the Churches are not duly apprized of the *Fitness* of those who offer themselves as Candidates for Communion with them, by the *Profession* which they make; and by ordering their *Conversions* according to it; but, on the contrary, have Reason to be dissatisfied about their *Fitness*; as they will frequently have Reason to be, where the *Elders* only have the Management of such Affairs, their *Liberty* in such Churches is manifestly invaded and infringed.

The *Brethren* in our Churches may possibly be wrought upon so far as to part with this Privilege to unreasonable Claimers of it: But, besides the Dis honour resulting from such a tame Resignation of a valuable Right, our *Brethren* ought to consider the bad Consequence, the vast Mischief, of parting with it: There cannot indeed be a greater Inlet to Corruption than this; for Churches must unavoidably be corrupted and the Ordinances miserably defiled in them, while the unworthy are freely received into them and the *Brethren* have not the Power, as they have the Right, of refusing such Persons.

The Reason of the Thing therefore is sufficient for the Justification of these Churches in the Use of their Liberty to judge concerning the Qualifications of those that offer themselves to their Communion: But we have Scriptural Authority and Example besides, in favour of the *Brethren's* Power and Liberty to propound any just and reasonable Exceptions against such Persons as appear disqualified for Admission into their Communion and the Privileges consequent upon such an Admission: For the Apostle PETER himself would not admit the Family of CORNELIUS to Baptism, until he had enquired of the *Brethren*, whether any of them had any Thing to object

object against the Admission of them, as in Act. X. 47. And we read concerning SAUL, that, offering himself to the Communion of the Church at *Jerusalem*, he was *not immediately admitted* into it, but kept off from it, until the *Exception* which was taken against him by the Disciples was removed, as in Act. IX. 26 and 27 Verses.

And the most *primitive Antiquity*, next to the Days of the Apostles, has taught these Churches to be *careful about their Admissions* into Communion: 'Tis true in the extraordinary Conversions to Christianity which were made among the *Jews*, they were all *immediately added to the Church*: And it is not much to be wondred at that they were so, because they were *before* acquainted with the Law and the Prophets, and were already brought into the Covenant of God: But afterwards the Churches did not make it their ordinary Practice *immediately to admit Persons into full Communion*; but kept them as *Catechumens*, that so their Knowledge might be encreased and the Truth of their Profession might be tried, until they were judged *qualified* for joining to the Church and enjoying complete Communion in it.

And this is a Thing that appears, not only from JUSTIN MARTYR, who asserts, that *none were allow'd to communicate in the Church in his Time but such as were baptized and believed the Doctrines of Christianity and lived according to the Laws of JESUS CHRIST*; but it is also manifest from numberless ancient Writers, that *the Baptized* were of old *confirmed* before they were admitted into Communion, and that in *some* of the primitive Churches *none* could be received into full Communion or be *perfect* among them, until he had given some Evidence of a Principle of Goodness within him.

Nor is it a Matter of much Difficulty to prove, that in the *Primitive Times* none were received to the Profession of Christianity, unless they had first given some

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Evidences of their Sincerity; either by *enduring some initiatory Penances*, as *three Days Fasting*, which was prescribed in the Time of the Author of the *false Clementine Recognitions* (o); or by *giving some Experiment of real Service*. Thus ARNOBIUS was not trusted until he had written in Defence of the Christian Religion: And CYRIL of Jerusalem in his Homilies to the *Competentes* is very earnest in urging the *Necessity of a sincere and cordial Intention*: And it was from the great Caution of admitting the Pagans to the Intuition of their Mysteries, that even *Adults* were not admitted after all the Manifestations of their Sincerity without the Testimony of *Susceptors or Godfathers*, Persons of approved Gravity and Sincerity (x): Tho' this was not always insisted on. But, among the Instances to be found in ancient Writers of their Care in early Times to keep their Communion pure, perhaps there was scarce any one more remarkable than that with reference to VICTORINUS: He, you must know, was a famous Rhetorician at Rome, who, on the Account of his Eminence and Fame, had a public Statue erected to his Honour: And He, by *Reading the Holy Scriptures*, of a strong and zealous Pagan, became a Christian: This He confessed privately to SIMPLICIAN: But He would not believe Him, unless He *confess'd it publicly in the Church* also: To this He at first answer'd with Scorn; *What! are they then the Walls of a Church that make a Christian?* But afterwards He became sensible of his Fault, and was afraid of being denied by the blessed JESUS at the last among such as refuse to confess HIM: Whereupon He came to SIMPLICIAN and was instructed and baptized: And, being to make the accustomed Confession, the *Liberty of Privacy* was then offered Him: But He would not accept of the Offer:

No,

(o) Pseudo Clement. Recog. L. III. & VI.

(x) Hen. Dodwel's Pref. to his two Letters of Advice.

No, said He, *I will make my Confession before all the People* (2).

It must be confessed indeed, that, as it was usual among the Primitive Christians to imitate the Heathens too far in several Respects referring to their sacred Rites, they particularly distributed their Converts into two Classes according to the Pagan Style: For, as among the Pagans there were *Learners and Illuminated Persons*; thus we find in the Fathers these two very frequently mentioned: And in them, as the *Persons* are distinguished, so are their *Duties and Privileges*: And it must be acknowledged, that the Apostle PAUL frequently alludes to these Distinctions, and that the ancient Divines afterwards made an ill Use of those Allusions.

But, altho' the Improvements which were made of such Distinctions proved in Process of Time not only superfluous, but also very prejudicial to Christianity; nevertheless, that Things may be done agreeable to Reason and Prudence, and that all Things may be perform'd decently and in Order according to Apostolical Direction, the Churches should be careful not at once to admit the *Learners* among the *Illuminated*: For there is no Divine Warrant nor any Reason, why such as are not capable of witnessing a good Confession and have not manifested their Faith and the Truth of their Profession by their Works should be favour'd with equal Privileges to those who are capable of these Things.

Wherefore, upon the whole, let the *Elders* of the Churches be as careful as they please in their Examinations of such as present themselves for Candidates of Communion, and let them endeavour to be fully certified of their Fitness for complete Fellowship; but, at the same Time, let not these Churches be negligent of their Duty, but except against all, whom they think to be disqualified for Communion with them, either by Reason

(2) Augustin. Confession. l. 8. c. 2.

of the pernicious Opinions which they may hold and vent, or by Reason of the vicious and unchristian Lives that they lead: For it is their Duty not to be Partakers in other Men's Sins, but rather to reprove them and keep themselves pure: And how can they comply with this Duty, unless they testify against the destructive Opinions and unbecoming Behaviours of such as offer themselves to the Communion among them? I cannot therefore but conclude this Chapter in the Style of LAURENTIUS: As Negligence, says He, with respect to Doctrine causes Heresies; so Negligence in Discipline produces Confusion and Scandals: Nor can the Church of CHRIST consist without it any more than a Commonwealth or School or any other Society: Wherefore we ought most studiously to exercise it (y).

Chap. VI.

(y) Sicut Negligentia in Doctrina Hæreses causat, ita Negligentia in Disciplina Confusionem & Scandala: Neque magis sine hac Ecclesia CHRISTI — recte regi potest aut consistere, quam vel Respub. vel Oeconomia civilis vel Schola vel ullus Conventus. — Qua propter studiosissime hanc exerceri iussit in Ecclesia Dei Apostolus Paulus, Et ipsam exercuit. Laurent. Exposit. Sept. Epistol. Rom. IX. p. 101.

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Chapter VI.

The Right of the Brethren in these Churches to *deal with their Christian Brethren in private and to judge in publick Scandals* opened and confirmed.

THE Churches of JESUS CHRIST in this Land are of Opinion, that, not only the *Ministers or Elders or Bishops* of the Churches, but *all the Christians* also which compose them, *have the Care of their Brethren*; and that every Christian, by the Authority of JESUS CHRIST, may *confirm and establish his Brethren in Knowledge and Faith, and exhort them to proceed in the Ways of Religion and Goodness*; and that, if any of his Brethren should subside either into *fatal Doctrinal Errors or irregular Behaviours*, every Christian should use his Endeavour to *reduce* them from their Errors in Judgment and the Irregularities of their Conduct to the Truth of the Christian Doctrine, and a diligent Conformity to the Divine Precepts: This is the Opinion of these Churches; and the Reformation of Churches by this Discipline, wherein *Love without Dissimulation* is exercised, we judge to be the only Method of recovering Evangelical Love out of its Languishments and restoring it to its primitive Vigour and Glory.

The Necessity of such a Discipline as this in particular Churches appears to us very clear from those various Passages in the New Testament which require the exercise of it among Christians.

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Our blessed SAVIOUR has expressly enjoined, as in **Mat. XVIII. 15**, *If thy Brother shall trespass against Thee, go and tell him his Fault between Thee and Him alone: If He shall hear Thee, Thou hast gained thy Brother.* Which Injunction, altho' it speaks concerning the Offence of a Neighbour against his Christian Brother, nevertheless, as every true Christian cannot but think that every Offence against GOD is a Trespass against Himself, therefore it may well reach, and indeed ought to reach, to every Sin and Transgression whatsoever. Now, besides the Dignity of the Person who gives this Injunction, the good and inestimable Consequence of it is to be considered by us: For our gracious LORD says, *If He shall hear Thee, Thou hast gained thy Brother,* that is, Thou hast brought Him over to Repentance and Reformation, and so to Salvation and Happiness. And it is required by the holy and inspired Apostle, in **Gal. VI. 1**, *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness, &c:* In which Text, whether we take *spiritual* to signify Christians in general, or such as were eminent in the Church for spiritual Knowledge and Gifts, as the Word is sometimes used, the Sense is plain and easy; and the Command is strong to all Christians, especially to such as are advanced in spiritual Knowledge, to take a particular Care of their offending Brethren, and shew all that Tenderness and Lenity towards them which is becoming the Gospel.— And how plain is the Precept to the *Thessalonians*, in **1 Thes. V. 14**, to warn them that are unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, &c; and in Verse 11th, to exhort and edify one another.

It appears then to be indispensably necessary, that all such as would approve themselves to be true Christians should, from a sacred Regard to the Authority and Precepts of their declared LORD and Master, take the most watchful Care of their Brethren and continually exhort them to every good Office and use their best Endeavours,

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yours, as to keep them from that which is evil, so to recover them likewise out of the Snares in which they may be unhappily entangled.

And, as it is necessary that Christians should thus shew their Care of their Brethren, their Watchfulness over them; it is also equally needful, that such as are admonished, corrected and exhorted by their Christian Brethren should acknowledge the Appointment of CHRIST and submit to His Discipline, thankfully receiving Brotherly Admonition and Correction as becomes the Disciples of the lowly JESUS, and studiously conforming to the same: Nor in Truth will they demean themselves as becomes serious Christians, if they despise such as from the Word of CHRIST admonish and correct them: For, if they despise such, nor will hearken to their pious Reproofs and Exhortations, they are not the Disciples of JESUS CHRIST: For, whereas it is He that speaketh to them by their faithful Reprovers, they do not see meet to hear Him.

This is the Discipline, concerning which we cannot have too good an Opinion nor express ourselves in too lofty a Strain: For we may say in the Style of CYPRIAN of this Discipline, that it is wholesome to follow it, whereas Averseness to it and Neglect of it is fatal (&): Nor have we any Wonder, that the Bohemians should be urged to be less afraid of Destruction from the Persecution of their Enemies than from the Neglect of such a holy Discipline (a). Wherefore may the great Head of the Church always dispose and enable us to prize this Discipline according to its real Worth and Consequence, and to conform unto it with the greatest Care and Religion!

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(&) Hanc & sectari salubre est & averfari ac negligere lethale. Cyprian. Epist. 28.

(a) Dicitur Lucæ Pragensis—Fratribus non tam ab Hostium Persecutionibus quam a neglecta Disciplina Interitum esse metuentum. Regenvols. System. Hist. Chronol. Eccles. Slavon. p. 316.

It has bin observed already, that *this Discipline is to be administred by every Christian (e)*: But, whereas the *Method wherein this Discipline should be exercised* ought to be particularly known, this therefore is now to follow: Now *This*, both from the Prescription of our blessed SAVIOUR and from the constant Practice of the Primitive Church, appears to be nothing else but the *Application of CHRIST's Institution* according to the Circumstances which occur (*).

Wherefore, that so this Discipline may rightly and properly be administred, there is a *twofold Distinction of Offences* to be observed: For, while some are *secret and private*, others are *public and open*; and some are *great*, whereas others are *comparatively small*: According to which Distinctions, the Discipline of CHRIST is to be *privately exercised* towards such whose Offences are *private*; whereas, if the Offences of any be *public* and to the Scandal of the Church, they are to be *publicly admonished and censured*.

If the Offence, that is committed by a Christian Brother, be *private*, provided two or three are observers of it, there should then be *three Steps* taken by his Christian Brethren in dealing with him: *First of all*, one of those who has seen the Offence of his Brother, should *privately admonish and reprove* him for it: And, if the *offending Brother despise the Admonition and Reproof* given him; then, in the *next Place*, he, that is acquainted with his Brother's Offence and grieved at his slighting his Brotherly Correction, should *take one or two more of his Brethren* with him, that so by the Mouth of *two or three Witnesses* the Regularity of the Procedure may be established: And, in fine, if the *offending Brother shall continue to slight the Admonitions* which are thus

(e) *Communis hac est Doctrina, ut nobis Cura sit Fratrum Salus.* Calvin in 1 Thes. V. 14.

(*) *Pro diversitate Morborum, diversitas adhibenda est Medicinæ: Illi corripiendi ne periant: Isti consolandi sunt, ne desiciant.* Hieronym. in 1 Thes. V.

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thus truly given him; the *third and last* Step to be taken is, to *tell the Church* of his Fault and of his Disregard of the Christian Conduct of his Brethren towards him.

But, if the Offence be at first public and manifest unto all, then there is no need of such a regular and gradual Process; but your open and flagitious public Transgressors are at once to be rebuked before all, that others also may fear, as in 1 Tim. V. 20. And yet even this public Discipline should be exercised according to the Distinction of great Transgressions or comparatively small ones; according to which Distinction, there should be either a public Admonition and Reproof or a Deprivation of the Privileges of their Christian Brethren who walk orderly. For Admonition and Reproof is a sufficient Correction for smaller public Offences. But, as for grosser Sins, and Stubbornness under kind Admonitions even tho' for smaller Faults, these deserve to be punished with denying the further Enjoyment of Communion and Ecclesiastical Privileges.

So then the Duty of the Brethren is clear, and their Power is great and invaluable: It is their Duty to expostulate with their Brethren, and as such to deal with them, when they are guilty of private Scandals, in a private Way, in a friendly and Christian Manner: And it is their Duty, Power and Privilege also to hear and judge concerning their Brethren in public Scandals; and, as they may forgive, and receive such as are truly penitent, they may also reprove, rebuke, exhort and censure notorious Offenders: For, when our SAVIOUR requireth a Christian, that, if he cannot succeed so far as to heal the Offence in private, he should then tell the Church; He certainly means a particular or Congregational Church (b), as the famous CALDERWOOD makes

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(b) Dic Ecclesiæ.—Hic Locus proprie & primarie de Ecclesiis particularibus intelligendus est, non de oecumenica sive Essentiali.
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evident. And the worthy BULLINGER has given a good Reason, why it must be so, which is agreeable to that assigned by CALDERWOOD; For, says He, *the universal Church can never convene from all Parts of the World, that rebellious Persons may be brought before it and submit unto it: Therefore to particular Churches must the Judgment concerning stubborn Offenders be bro't and referred (x).*

And this Direction of our blessed SAVIOUR necessarily implies, that *the Church should hear the Case brought before them, make Enquiry into the State of it, that so they may see with their own Eyes the Offence which has bin committed, and then judge concerning the Offence as they should find upon Enquiry.*

These Things are so plain and obvyous to common Understandings, that Men could never have perverted the Sense of our SAVIOUR's Words, if they were desirous of attending to them and observing them: Nor, if their *Love to Truth* were equal to their Regard to their Interest, could they so misunderstand our LORD's Direction as by a pretended Regard to it to deviate from the Simplicity of the Gospel.

This is the Discipline, concerning which we heartily subscribe to the Declaration of the learned ZANCHY, wherein he says, that *no one is exempted from this Discipline, whether he be an Elder, or a Pastor, or a Magistrate, unless they would be exempted from the Number of the Brethren and therefore of the Sons of GOD: Wherefore they were mere Flatterers, who contended that*

sive Representativa: Nam deferre Offensas ad Ecclesiam Occumencam Essentialem impossibile est.—CHRISTUS amandat Fideles ad Conventum ordinarium Et Remedium paratissimum. Didac. Aliare. Damascen. p. 196.

(x) *Non potest universalis Ecclesia convenire unquam in tota Terrarum Orbe, ut Et deferentur Rebelles: Particularibus ergo deferatur Judicium de Contumacibus. Bullinger. Decad. V. Serm. I. De S. Cathol. Eccles.*

the Pope of Rome could not upon any Account have this Discipline exercised upon him (o).

To proceed,

That *the Church or Brethren have the Power of Judging*, as has bin said, may be argued from *several Passages upon sacred Record*; from which Passages it is abundantly evident, that they gave their Determination and Judgment in such Cases as properly came before them.

Not to mention, that the *Brethren of the Circumcision* expostulated with PETER about his Communion with CORNELIUS and his Family, and that He was so far from *rejecting their Complaint*, as if they had gone beyond their proper Power and Limits, that He readily undertook and endeavour'd to give them suitable Satisfaction, as has already bin observed.

We find, that *the Brethren of the Church of Corinth* pass'd their Censure upon the *Incestuous Corinthian*. And the Apostle PAUL reprov'd them all, that they had no sooner put him away from among them, as in 1 Cor. V. 2; and, at Verse 12th, He expressly assur'd them, that they had *the Power of Judging such as are within (x)*; and, in the next, the last, Verse of that Chapter, the Apostle requires it of them all, that they put away the wicked Person from among them; and, in 2 Cor. II. 7, He advises the Brethren, upon the Repentance of the Offender, to forgive, restore and comfort him.

The same Apostle also towards the Close of his Epistle to the Galatians, instructing them in the Discipline

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(o) *Ab hac Disciplina nemo eximitur, quicumque ille sit, sive Senior, sive Pastor, sive supremus Magistratus, nisi velit a numero Fratrum eoque Filiorum Dei eximi. Proinde meri Adulatores fuerunt, qui Pontificem Roman. contenderunt, non posse ulla de Causa excommunicari.* Zanch. De Eccles. p. 145.

(x) *Hujusmodi autem Disciplina pertinere ad Ecclesiam satis apparet Ex toto. Cap. V. Prior. ad Corinth. Crall. Ethic. Christ. l. IV. Cap. XXXI,*

pline of the Church, advises them how to behave with respect to their corrupt Teachers: Laying down the same Ground and Reason of proceeding against them, as against the Incestuous Corinthian, namely, that a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, as in Gal. V. 9; and presuming that they would be of the same Mind with him, as in Verse 10 and 11; he then declares what Censure he wished might be passed upon their corrupt Teachers, as at Verse 12, *I would that they were cut off which trouble you*: Which Passage all the Greek Fathers and some of the Latin oddly interpret, *I wish they were not only circumcised, but even made like the Priests of the Mother of the Gods, who was formerly worshipped by you of Galatia (c)*: But the most plain and natural Construction of it is, *I wish they were cut off from your Fellowship and Communion*: And, lest it should be objected, that the Brethren had not Power to do this, therefore the Apostle annexes this Reason, *for, Brethren, ye are called unto Liberty*. And, because it might be argued, that such a Liberty of cutting off their Teachers being allowed would be attended with bad Consequences, therefore the Apostle advises, that they do not use their Liberty as an Occasion to the Flesh, but so as that by Love they might serve one another: Now, if the Brethren have the Power of censuring their corrupt Teachers, as appears from these Hints, surely they may well have the Privilege of censuring their offending Brethren.

And it was likewise the Direction of the very same Apostle to the whole Church at Thessalonica, to withdraw themselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, as in 2 Thes. III. 6: And this Direction of withdrawing from such is much the same with that wherein he requires them to warn the unruly, in 1 Thes. V. 14, or admonish such: Where the Word which we translate unruly is the very same as this which

(c) *Usinam non solum circumcidantur, sed etiam abscondantur.*

is translated disorderly: For this is a Power belonging to all the Members of the Church, as is manifest from these Directions to them.

And it moreover appears, that particular Churches have such a Power; because they are chargeable with Guilt, if any Offences are committed by their Members and yet remain uncensured by them: Thus the Church of Pergamos is reproved as guilty of Offence for suffering BALAAM and the Nicolaitans among them, as in Rev. II. 14 and 15; and, at Verse 20, CHRIST has a few Things against the Church at Thyatira for suffering JEZEBEL among them: But, if these Churches had not sufficient Power to turn out the Offenders in them, it would be hard to blame them for the Toleration of them in their Communion. And hence we may conclude, that, what our SAVIOUR wrote to any of those Churches, HIS SPIRIT says to all the Churches: So that, if we would answer the Divine Expectations, we should beware of Remissness in Discipline and calmly tolerating the like Offences among ourselves; and we should also be careful to admonish other Churches about us with Love and Faithfulness for the Offences observable in them.

But, besides the Scriptural Directions and Patterns in Favour of such a Discipline, the Reason of the Thing plainly speaks for such a Power in particular Churches: For, as that animal Body is defective, weak and unsound in its Nature and Constitution, which has not Strength equal to the Expulsion of the malignant Humours which are brought into it; even so those Bodies, particular Churches, would be but in a feeble State, which have not Power to get rid of their vicious, corrupt and offensive People: Nor can we think it for the Honour of our blessed SAVIOUR to leave His Churches in such a feeble State:— But we have Reason to be thankful, that the great Head of the Church has given His Churches such an athletic Constitution that they have Power equal to the Purging themselves of their superfluous

fluorous and vicious Humours: And blessed be God, while some other Churches are complaining for the Want of a *godly Discipline*, these Churches enjoy it and will not suffer such as are known to be prophane and vile Persons to escape it.

Perhaps it will be demanded here, *whether the Churches in the Ages immediately succeeding the Apostles Days were in the Possession of such Power and exerted it upon proper Occasions?* Now, in Answer to this Enquiry, I would say, that, supposing they had not nor did exercise such a Power, this does not hinder but that it properly belonged unto them, as it appears that it did from the *Injunctions and Examples upon sacred Record*: So that they might lawfully and honestly take and exercise this Power.

But the Truth is, we find, that *the Churches in the Ages after the Apostles* possessed this Power, and on suitable Occasions used the same. So CLEMENT of Rome styles the *Censures of the Church, the Things commanded by the Multitude*(d). And it appears, that all the People of the Diocess, Church or Bishoprick were present at the Censures of the Church from ORIGEN'S Description of the Appearance of an Offender before the whole Church(e). And CYPRIAN writes, that, if any were under Censure, before they could be admitted to Communion, they were to plead their Cause before all the People of the Church(f): And, when some had committed some considerable Faults, he was so far from setting himself up as a sufficient Judge, empowered to manage the Affair, that he expressly declares that *they ought to be tried by all the People*(g): Nay he openly protests, that from the Beginning of his Ministry he determined to do nothing of his own Head, and

with-

(d) Clement. I Epist. ad Corinth.

(e) Origen. Comment. in Matth. Tom. XIII. p. 335. (i)

(f) *Asturi Causam apud Plebem universam*. Cyprian. Epist. 19.

(g) Cyprian. Epist. 28.

(h) Cyprian.

(i) For.

(k) L.

(l) In.

(m) H.

(n) R.

without the Consent of his People (b). Thus we see what the Discipline of the Primitive Church was: And methinks, as the Abbot FLEURY in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical History rightly observes, the ancienter the Discipline is, it is by so much the more venerable.

And, if the Testimony of later Worthies may be of any Weight, we have these also to produce in Favour of the Discipline for which we have bin pleading. LAMBERT said, that Excommunication ought to be done by the Congregation assembled together with the Pastors (i). PETER MARTYR concludes that none can be excommunicated without the Consent of the Church (k). BUCER freely owns, that the Power is in all the Church (l). And Mr. HOWE, when he was asked by Dr. WILKINS concerning the Discipline of the Church of England, in which the poor People have no Share at all, replied, that in Reality it had no Discipline at all (m), and therefore he could not be fond of it.

Nay a celebrated Scotch Presbyterian (n) acknowledges, that not only grave BEZA, CALVIN, BUCER, BULLINGER, MELANCTHON, BUCAN, PARÆUS, RIVET, SIBRAND, JUNIUS, TRELCATIUS; but also CYPRIAN, JEROM, AUGUSTIN, NAZIANZEN, CHRYSOSTOM, AMBROSE, THEODORET, THEOPHYLACT require, that all Things should be done consentiente Plebe, with the Consent of the People.

But some will be ready to say, If the Power of Discipline be in the Churches, how came they to be deprived of it? And the Answer is, that some vile Persons, under the Specious Pretence of raising the Church and promoting its Power, called the Clergy only the Church first of all,

(h) Cyprian. Epist. 6.

(i) Fox. 2. p. 1017.

(k) Loc. Commen. p. 783.

(l) In Matth. XVI. 19.

(m) Howe's Life. p. 32.

(n) Rutherford.

all, and then sought to make them *Lords over Princes* by giving them the *Power of Excommunication*. *Hinc ille Lachrymæ!* Hence the *Power of Discipline* has bin taken out of the Hands of the People, and infinite Disorders have ensued upon it: For, when a *Bishop* or a *small Number of Ministers* have the *Supervision or Oversight and Management of Affairs*, it is next to impossible but that *Pride and Ambition, Faction and Envy, Political Regards and Secular Interests* should govern: And indeed this is no more than what is observed by the Historians *SOCRATES* and *SOZOMEN*, as well as by several other Fathers.

I would not be understood, notwithstanding all that has bin said; *entirely to exclude the Elders from the Management of the Discipline of the Church*: For the *Duty of admonishing Offenders privately and personally* belongs to them *in common with the rest of the Church*; tho' it does not properly belong to the *Elders as such*, but only *as Brethren of the same Society*: And yet it must be allowed, that *Elders*, by *Virtue of their Office* are *enabled to do it with more Authority in a moral Sense*, tho' they do not strictly and properly *exercise the Power of their Office*. And it must be acknowledged, that in the *Discharge of their Office* they may be capacitated to see and know the *Faults of the Brethren* sooner than others; but yet, in the *Exercise of this Discipline* every Member is *equally concerned with the Elders*, as appears from the *Obligations* which lie upon them to watch over and exercise *special Love towards one another*; for their *Obligations to this* are equal: And indeed this *Duty* is so incumbent on *every Member of the Church*, that, if any neglect it, he *sins against the Institution of CHRIST* and becomes a *Partaker in the Sin* of the offending Party, and is *guilty of his Danger and Ruin*, as well as *chargeable with all the Inconveniencies and Injuries accruing to the Church* by the *Continuance of its Members in Sin and Wickedness*: So that, upon these Considerations, all the Brethren not only have the

Liberty

Liberty of admonishing one another, but it is their plain and indispensable Duty so to do: And whosoever of them neglects this Duty is chargeable with the Hatred of his Brother.

But, altho' this Duty be personally incumbent on every particular Member of the Church, this however hinders not but that, if several at the same Time know the Sin of an Offender and jointly are offended at it, they may together, if they think it prudent, in the first Instance admonish him: And, if they do so, this is to be considered as the first and private Admonition.

As to the Way and Manner wherein this Duty is to be discharged, I would only observe, that it should be done with Prudence, Tenderneſs and a due Regard to all Circumstances, from Love to the Person offending, out of Obedience to JESUS CHRIST, agreeably to the Rule which is given for our Direction in it and with a Readineſs to receive Satisfaction.

And now the great and good Ends to be proposed in such a Discipline are, that undissembled Love may be maintained, that the offending Brother may be gained, that he may be preserved from Dishonour by the unnecessary Divulging of his Failings and Errors, that the Churches may not be scandalized by the hasty exposing of the Failings of their Members whether they be real or imaginary; and that the Trouble of a public Hearing may be prevented: And, if these Ends be obtained, by the accused Person's manifesting his Innocence as to the Facts alleg'd against him or by his Acknowledgement, Repentance and Promises of Reformation, then this Part of the Discipline of CHRIST's Church has obtained the desired Effect.

But, if these good Ends be not answered, then the Persons, who have endeavoured to reclaim their offending Brother by private Methods, are to inform the Elders of the Church concerning their Proceedure; and by them the Report should be made to the Church, as of the Crime committed, so of the Testimonies given to prove the Truth

of it, of the *Means used* to bring the Offender to Acknowledgement and Repentance, and concerning the *Deportment of the Offender* under the private Admonitions given him, to wit, *his Rejection of them and refusing to render any Satisfaction* on the Account of his Offence.

And, when Things are thus proposed to the Church and the Offender heard, *the whole Church, Elders and Brethren*, are to consider the *Nature of the Offence* and to judge concerning the Offence, as well as the *Demeanour of the Offender*: And, if the Offence be evident and glaring, the Offender is to be admonished with the *Consent and Concurrence of the Church* by the Elders: But, if the Offender *despise the Admonition* of the Church and *continues obstinate and impenitent*, then it is the Mind and Will of our blessed SAVIOUR, that he should be cut off from the *Privileges of the Church* and cast out of the Society: And this is the last *Act of the Discipline of the Church* for the Correction of Offenders: So that, by the Constitution of JESUS CHRIST, the *Body of the Church or the Multitude of the Brethren* are interested in the *Administration of the Disciplinary Power in the Church*.

This is the Discipline of these *Congregational Churches*, which we apprehend to be most conformable to *Reason and the Holy Scriptures*, to the *Practice of the Apostles and the Primitive Christians*.

As to a *Power fastned to the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, a Power of Binding and Loosing, by which Men can excommunicate and deliver up a Person to the Devil in the Name and by the Authority of JESUS CHRIST, we pretend to no such Power: Nor do we approve of any such Power, to which some make their Pretences, by which *Pastors or Synods*, in Conjunction and Confederacy with the *Civil Magistrate*, or by an *Ecclesiastical Power* distinct from the Magistrate's, but equal to it, are capable of binding and losing, as has bin said: *Nay we detest it.*

We

(x)
Infalli

We know, that *Excommunication* was an Act of Apostolical Authority; but we can see no Reason, why *Delivering up to Satan* to be buffeted should be made the common Form of *Excommunication*, and become a Precedent for the constant Practice of the Church.

That this was an Act of miraculous Power visibly lodged with the Apostles is plain to us; because, as they could strike Men blind and dead, they had the Power also of letting evil Spirits loose to terrify, plague and punish such Persons as were Enemies of Truth and Righteousness, that so a terrible Remedy might be inflicted for a dreadful Evil: We do not therefore wonder, that the Apostles never mention *this* among the standing Appointments for the Church to observe nor give any Charge or Directions about it: And it appears very strange unto us, that this Method of denouncing *Anathemas* has obtained so much in Churches, and even among such Churches as pretend to elevated Degrees of Reformation; believing, that the absurd Notion of the *Infallibility of the Church* has bin carried on by it, and that it has laid the Foundation for endless Animosities and the greatest Uncharitableness.

In fine then; Altho' these Churches may be reproached by many as very defective in their Politicks, inasmuch as they did not erect an infallible Tribunal, but yet expect the good People to submit to their Decisions, altho' they are subject to Error; whereas, in other Establishments, the People are obliged to submit to an uncontrollable infallible Authority (x): It is nevertheless to be hoped, that these Churches will not fall from their Stedfastness notwithstanding any Reproaches of this Nature. May God of His great Goodness enable us still to follow the Illuminations of Reason and Scripture, still to keep ourselves disengag'd from an infallible and incontestible Tribunal, and still to abhor the Thoughts of a
P 2 mean,

(x) *Qualibet Ecclesia sibi Verbis arrogat Orthodoxiam, Re Infallibilitatem.* Locke in Epist. ad Limborch.

mean, ignominious Subjection to any humane Tyrannical Authority whatsoever! For the Consciences of Christians are and ought to be the last Resort, wherein our Faith and Worship and all religious Matters should be judged without any further Appeal: And, altho' Christians may be exhorted and have Persuasions used with them, none ought to be constrained in such Things wherein their Consciences are concerned: The Magistrate may argue, and the Synod may advise and persuade; but who gave them either Right or Power to oblige and force Men in religious Matters? Now particular Churches have just the same Liberty with respect to their Members? And, if they pretend to any constraining Power over their Members, they act as the Civil Magistrate, not as an Assembly of Christians and faithful People: So that, in short, tho' these Churches as such and as sincere Christians think their Members accountable to them and censurable by them; nevertheless they pretend to no more Power and Jurisdiction over them, than a Society of discrete and grave Philosophers over such as are admitted into their Society, whom they see meet to admit when they are duely qualified; and they think themselves obliged to censure and exclude from their Society, when they have forfeited the Privileges of it by their exotic Sentiments or indecent Carriages.— 'Tis true, some of our Congregational Brethren, who verge towards Presbyterianism, pretend to much more in their Discipline than that for which I have bin pleading: But all such as are thoroughly Congregational will be content with this: I must confess, that this is all the Power to which I think the Churches have any rightful Claim, and I conceive, all that they pretended to exercise in the early Times of Christianity (2): And God grant, that these

(2) *Neque vero Excommunicatio aliud tum erat quam Separatio, Non-Communio, Renunciatio Communionis; non vero Damnatio Execratio per Candelas Extinguas, Campanarum Batum, ut hodie si solet Romæ. Hornii. Hist. Eccles. p. 145.*

Mr. Abbot Eteny says, in his Discourses on Ecclesiastical

History,
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these Churches may never desire any further Power and Liberty than such a rational due as they at present enjoy; nor suffer any, whether Pastors or Synods, to take away their Crown.

Chapter VII.

The Liberty of these Churches to sit and act in Councils and Synods cleared and vindicated; and the Power of Synods explained.

IT is entirely consistent with *Reason and the Revelation of GOD's Mind in His Word*, that there should be *Councils and Synods* called upon requisite Occasions: But it is *neither agreeable to Nature nor Scripture* to turn such occasional Helps into the *Form of a Carnal State Polity* and erect a *Government* out of *Friendly and Christian Consultations* for the *Instruction, Benefit and Comfort* of our Brethren.

There may be *Synods or Meetings of Pastors* for promoting *Peace and Concord*; but there is great *Danger*, lest

History, that this *Cursing or Excommunication*, as practised at *Rome*, is like a *feeble old Man*, who, perceiving himself slighted by his *Children* and not being able to come out of his *Bed* to chastise them as before, throws whatsoever he has in his *Hands* at them to appease his *impotent Passion*, and then, forcing the *Tone* of his *Voice*, uses all the *Imprecations* against them he can think of.

lest such Meetings should be hurtful to the Principles and Liberties of particular Churches and so degenerate from the good Ends which ought to be designed and pursued in them: For, as SUTLIVIOUS observes, *Nulla in Ecclesia Dei graviora excitata sunt Schismata, nec Hareses exorta sunt ab ullo tetriora quam ab Episcopis*, The worst of Schisms and blackest Heresies have bin raised by Bishops (n).

In the Year 1700, there was publish'd a Book at Amsterdam by one PETER SHEPHERD (o), wherein he endeavours to prove by natural, political and mathematical Arguments that the Kingdoms, Principalities and Republicks, wherein the Romish Religion prevails, are in a fair Way of being destroyed by the Ambition and Avarice of the Popes and of their Clergy: But it is as easy to prove from the same Arguments, that the Liberties of all free Churches are in Danger of Destruction from the frequent Associations of Ministers: The Resolution of GREGORY NAZIANZEN therefore is not at all to be wonder'd at: For, said He to PROCOPIUS (p), If I must write the Truth itself, I am of the Mind to be absent from every Meeting of Bishops: For I never saw a joyful and happy End of any Council [of them] nor any that did not occasion the Encrease of Evils rather than the Redress or Reformation of them: For pertinacious Contention and the vehement Desire of Lording are such as no Words can express. And indeed there is none, who knows any Thing of Antiquity, but is well acquainted with the great Mischiefs which have arisen from Combinations of domineering Clergymen. One DIOSCORUS, who was President in the Second Council at Ephesus over Four Hundred Persons, was so moved with Rage and Passion against FLAVIAN, Bishop of Antioch, that he rose up from his Seat and killed him with Blows and Kicks and

(n) Suttiv. de Pontif. Roman. l. 2. cap. 10.

(o) Works of Learned for the Year 1700.

(p) Gregor. Nazianzen. Epist. 55. p. 814.

and trampled upon his Body after he was dead.—And it is remarkable, that the *Canons*, which have the best Doctrine and the truest Morality and Goodness in them, were not made by *Assemblies of Clergymen*, nor by numerous *Synods and Oecumenical Councils*, wherein the Clergy have had the chief Management, but in *those Councils and Synods which were private and consisted of a few Persons of the Laity* as well as the Clergy: And hence most of the *African Councils* were the best in all the World: For the *African Bishopricks* were like our Congregational Churches; nor did the *Bishops or Ministers* strive who should be greatest in them, according to the Manner of some in other Places.

As for *particular Churches*, we readily concede, that they, as of equal Power, may in some Cases appointed by JESUS CHRIST meet together by themselves or by their *Delegates in a Council or Synod* and may perform fundry Acts of Ecclesiastical Power; but yet it is our avowed Principle, that the *Members of Councils and Synods*, with all the Power which they exercise and put forth, are all of them primarily given to the several *particular Churches*, on whose Account they are gathered and employed, either as the *first Subject* in whom they reside or the *first Object* about whom they are conversant: So that, altho' we differ from some of our Neighbours about the *Power of Councils and Synods*, we have no Difference at all with them about their *Being*; for we freely acknowledge, that they ought to be, when proper Occasions require.

Dr. HUMPHREY HODY has published an *History of English Councils and Convocations, and of the Clergy's sitting in Parliament*, in 1701, in which he has taken a great deal of Pains and Care in turning over ancient Records and collecting Passages out of them; but by them it does not appear, where the Original Right of convening Councils and Synods was lodged: He shews indeed, that Synods were sometimes called by the Authority of the Clergy, and at other Times convened by the Prince:

Prince: But this does not determine, where the Right of Convening them is placed.

Councils and Synods should be composed of such Persons as are fit and proper, both of the *Eldership* and the *Laity*; and both have equal Right to speak their Sentiments in them: 'Tis true a particular Regard may sometimes be had to *Pastors* and *Bishops* in sending Delegates to Synods: But, if the Churches should only have such *Bishops* or *Pastors* as are either not so well acquainted with their Constitution or are *Enemies* unto it, it is their Duty to keep them at Home at least.

And, when a Number of pious, skilful and prudent Persons, both *Ministers* and *Brethren*, are sent and convened in Council or Synod, they ought to have equal Power and Authority in acting and voting: This is the Right of the Fraternity; and, in order to support and establish this Right of the Fraternity in Councils and Synods, there are a few brief Remarks to be offered, which have considerable Weight and Significance in them.

It is certain, that we have the Authority of the Scriptures and the Practice of the Church in the Apostle's Days for this Power of the Brethren: For we read, that the *Apostles* and *Elders* came together to consider of the Matter that was to be laid before them, in *Act. XV. 6*: And it follows, at Verse 22, then pleased it the *Apostles* and *Elders*, with the whole Church, to send chosen Men, &c: From which Passages it plainly appears, that, not only the *Apostles* and *Elders*, but the whole Church also, and so the People, were present in this Council and were concerned in the definitive Sentence of it: But now this Council ought to be the Rule and Pattern for all other Councils whether greater or smaller: Since therefore in this Council, not only the *Apostles* and *Elders*, but all the People are said to give their Opinion and unite in the definitive Decree; surely the same Rule ought to be observed in all other Councils or Synods: For, as all other Synods are vastly inferior to this

this Apostolical one, it may well be expected that they should be conformable to the same.

And, besides this *Example* upon sacred Record to justify the Right of the Brethren to sit and act in Council, there are several Places of Scripture, which allow all the Faithful in Ecclesiastical Conventions to judge in religious Matters: Not to insist upon that Passage, in 1 Cor. XIV. 24, where it is said, *If all prophesy, and there come that believeth not or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all*: It is plain both from the old and new Testament, that Divine Matters should be publickly considered by the People and the final Judgment referring to them should be left with the People. So we read, in 1 King. XVIII. 21 and 39 Verses, that ELIJAH came to all the People and said, *how long halt ye between two Opinions? If the LORD be GOD, follow HIM; but if Baal, follow him: And the People answered Him not a Word.*— And when all the People saw [how the Sacrifice was consumed from above] they fell on their Faces and said, *The LORD HE is GOD, the LORD HE is the GOD.* And it is written, that, when PHILIP preached to the City of Samaria, the People with one Accord gave Heed to the Things which He spake, and there was great Joy in the City, as in Act. VIII. 6 and 8 Verses. So that it should seem, as if the People, upon hearing and maturely weighing the Discourses of PHILIP, publickly testified their Approbation of what He taught them.

And it is worthy to be observed, that this Right of the Laity has bin asserted and exercised in later Times: For, not to mention it, that the Temporal Lords and Commons, in the two Reigns that brought on the Reformation, were much better Judges of Religion, than the Bishops and the Convocation; and, if they had not promoted the Reformation, tho' poor Laicks, the English Nation to this Day had lain buried in the Egyptian, and worse than Egyptian, Darknes of Popery. — It is well known, that, when the Calling of that infamous

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Assembly

Assembly the Council of Trent was proposed at Norimberg, in the Year 1522, all the Estates of Germany desired and insisted, that *Admittance might be granted unto Laymen* as well as Clergymen, to be, not only *Spectators and Witnesses*, but also *Judges* in the Council: Which being refused, they would not come unto it, but published the Reasons of their withdraw; one of which was, *because Laymen were not allowed to vote among them*. And what learned Englishman is there that can be ignorant, how our learned WHITAKER, our excellent JUEL, our skilful and industrious WILLET and other Writers of our Nation, in writing against the Romanists, maintain the *Right of Laicks to sit and judge in Ecclesiastical Councils*? And, as the most famous Councils and Synods in the Churches of the Reformation have admitted such Members in them; so, in the primitive Times and the Ages next unto the Apostles, it is unquestionable that such had not only *Seats*, but *Votes* in Councils allowed them: And, even in as late a Council as that of *Calcedon*, we find *seven Earls, ten Senators and others*, besides Ecclesiasticks.

But, in Truth if there were no *Instances or Examples* of this, this is very plain and evident, that the *Divine Spirit* sometimes and very frequently bestows such *Gifts* on the *Brotherhood* as render them worthy to be heard and make it fit that they should declare their Judgment: So that the *Reason of the Thing* requires, that their *Gifts* should not be despised, but that they should have the *Liberty of exercising them freely upon requisite Occasions*.

And *Natural Justice*, besides, supplies us with an *Argument in Defence of the Brethren's Right to sit and act in Councils*: For nothing can be more fit and just and equal, than that the *common Cause of all the Churches* should be determined by the *Votes and Suffrages of the Churches*: And, inasmuch as the *HOLY SPIRIT* with His Influences is not confined to any particular sort of Men in the Churches, it is fit that every Brother should exercise freely the *Gifts which he has freely received*: For that

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(r) Pa
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that which concerneth all ought to be handled in some good Measure or Degree by all who are qualified. And, as the Faith of Christians, as well as what should be their Practice, is a Matter of universal Concernment; therefore the Brethren, who are qualified as before, should in Councils have their Share in discussing these Things and giving their Determinations upon them.

Furthermore; As the Scripture is the supreme Judge of all Controversies in Religion and the infallible Rule of all Judgment; and as they who sit and act in Councils and Synods are only to be Interpreters and Explainers of what is contained in the Word of God; therefore the Brethren, as well and as much as their Officers, may give their Judgment in Councils and Synods. And indeed the Opinion of one Layman, which is agreeable to the Scriptures, is to be preferred before the solemn Judgment of an whole Council of Clergymen which is contradictory to them. So GRATIAN acknowledges, that the Authority of JEROM supported by the sacred Scripture is to be valued before that of an whole general Council (q): So PANORMITAN, tho' an Abbot, writes, that the Opinion of even one Idiot, well guarded with Testimonies from the Scripture is altogether preferable to the Decrees of an whole Council or the Pope (r), which are not consonant with them: And GERSON maintains, that every Man of Learning may and ought to resist or withstand an whole Council, if he sees that they err either thro' Ignorance or Malice (s). And this is a good Argument in Favour of the Brethren's Right to sit and act in Councils: For what is the pretended Reason, why Bishops and Elders should be chiefly called to Councils? Why truly it is said, that they are generally more wise and learned than their

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(q) Gratian. Quest. 36. Can. ult.

(r) Panormitan. Comment. in Chronic.

(s) Gerson. de Examinat. Doctrin. par. 1.

Neighbours; and therefore they should especially be
employed. But it must be confessed, that it is often
otherwise. And therefore, if there can be found any
Laymen more learned than their Ministers or equally
wise, there can be no good Reason why they should
not be called to Councils and act and judge in them, in
all Respects equally with their Ministers.

Now, in fine, is primitive Antiquity a Stranger to this
Liberty of the Fraternity. I could quote numerous
Passages out of the Historians EUSEBIUS, SOZOMENUS
and BEDA, from which it appears, that not
only Bishops or Ministers, but Laymen also, were not
only present in Councils, but also spoke their Minds and
argued and gave their Determinations. But it is suffici-
ent for our present Purpose, that, from the Acts of
ancient Councils, it is very manifest that the Brethren
voted and acted in them: In the first Council of Nicæa
not only Bishops and Elders sat and judg'd, but the
Laity also had equal Liberty with them: And a Lay-
man in the Presence of the whole Council, disputing
with a Pagan Philosopher, overcame him and converted
him to the Christian Faith (t). Laymen, as well as
Bishops, Elders and Deacons, represented the Churches
to which they belong'd in the Synod of Antioch, which
condemnd PAULUS SAMOSETANUS (u). And the
Faithful in Asia condemned the Montanists (v). And at
a great Synod held at Carthage (w), there were present
Eighty seven Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, with a
great Part of the Laity (x): Nay Cardinal Cusanus
acknowledges, that Emperors and their Judges, who were
Laymen were present and acted in the eight Councils which
are called general (y). And even NICHOLAS the Pope

(t) See Euseb. l. 1. cap. 3.

(u) Epist. l. 7. cap. 30.

(v) Euseb. l. 5. cap. 16.

(w) Circit. Ann 358.

(x) Cyprian. Epist. 14.

(y) de Concordant. Catholic. l. 1. cap. 1. §. 1. (s)

tells the Emperor MICHAEL to the same Purpose, and he adds, that the Faith is universal and common, belonging not only to the Clergy, but also to the Laity and to all who are Christians (2).

Upon such Grounds and Reasons as these, the Churches in New-England have asserted the Right of the People to sit and act in Synods in their Platform of Church-Discipline: And agreeable to these Principles, as well as the concurring Practice of the Primitive Churches, these Churches have always allow'd the Brethren their full Liberty in Councils. And it is worthy to be remarked, that in the Synod of these Churches, convened in the Year 1679, some Elders came from some particular Churches to represent them without any Brethren, at which the Synod was so far dissatisfied, that they would not suffer those Pastors to sit with them, until they had prevailed with their Churches to send some Brethren along with them: For they were very jealous of allowing any Thing, that might look like an Infringement of that Liberty, which by Divine Institution belongs to particular Churches.

But, if any shall remain dissatisfied upon this Head, after all that has bin offered; I must beg leave to refer them for the more full Display and Confirmation of it to a learned Disquisition concerning Ecclesiastical Councils, which was publish'd by my Grandfather Dr. INCREASE MATHER; wherein there is enow said to satisfy any reasonable Man concerning this Right of the Brethren, for which I have bin pleading.

These Churches in New-England have never convened in a General Synod but upon the Motion of the Civil Magistrate to consider of Affairs wherein all the Churches were concerned: But they suppose, notwithstanding this, that they have a full Liberty to meet in Synods, without the Direction of the Civil Magistrate: For such a Liberty the primitive Churches had before

(2) vid. Epist. ejus. l. 3. cap. 16.

CONSTANTINE ascended the Imperial Throne: And surely no Christian Prince has any Right to hinder these Churches in the Exercise of this Liberty, when they judge it requisite for the preserving of their Peace and good Order.

And this will more especially appear, if it be considered, that the Synods of these Churches are not like those of other Churches: For they have no Weapons but what are spiritual: They neither pretend to nor desire any Power that is juridical: If they can but instruct and persuade, they gain their End: But, when they have done all, the Churches are still free to accept or refuse their Advice: As they have no secular Power to enforce their Canons, they neither ask nor desire its Aid. And, since these Synods are such innocent and inoffensive Things, none, that have any due Information concerning them, can reasonably object against their Meeting together or forbid them, without a manifest Invasion of the common Liberties of Mankind.

I have said, that these Churches, when they meet in Synods, claim to themselves no Juridical Power: For they are of the celebrated CHAMIER'S Opinion, that the Determination of a Council or Synod is persuasive, not compulsive; a ministerial Judgment, not bringing along with it any Authority and Necessity; and so a decisive Suffrage not in itself, but as it is taken out of the Scripture (G): And they can heartily fall in with the Declaration of the famous HOMMIUS, that the Decrees of Councils ought not to be propounded to the Churches or intruded upon them, as Prætorian Sayings or Persian Decrees, but should be sent unto them, that they may examine them by the Rule of GOD'S Word (a): And it is with

to vñodm
 (G) *Sententia Concilii per se ipsa Suggestionis est, non Coactionis: iudicium ministeriale, non Auctoritatem per se Necessitatemque adferens; adeoque Suffragium decisivum non per se, sed quatenus ex Scriptura depromitur.* Chamier. Tom. V. Panstrat. Cathol. l. 3. cap. 9. de Conciliis.

(a) *Fest. H. mm. de Auctorit. Concilior. Disput. 18. Thes. 4.*

(b)

Pleasure that they read the free and honest Confessions of Dr. BURNET, that the Determinations of Councils, whether the greater or less, seem to him to be little different from the Decrees of Senates or Courts, or from the Opinions of learned Men concerning certain Matters proposed for them to consult upon; to which indeed a due Regard ought to be paid: But, he adds, as for any Obligation that lies upon us to receive any Opinions concerning sacred Matters and embrace them as Articles of Faith; every Man's Conscience is to be his Judge in the last Appeal, GOD being the Witness to his Sincerity. Doctors, or Congregations of Doctors, may err as grossly as any others, and build upon a Foundation of Hay or Straw, empty and combustible Matter. This I constantly and firmly believe, that, since the Times of the Apostles, there has bin no infallible Tribunal here below: Nothing of equal Authority, of equal Certainty with the sacred Writings, neither Determination of Council nor oral Tradition; and that Men's Consciences cannot so far be bound by the Opinions of any Persons whatever, but that there remains in private Persons the Judgment of Discretion, which is to be directed by the Rule of holy Scripture (b), &c. Thus he writes, and much more to the same Purpose. And, if we consult many other learned Writers of the Church of England, we shall find Cause to conclude them to be against the Power and Jurisdiction of Councils, and that they are for Concord rather than Regimen or Government. Thus in the Scheme of Church-Government, drawn up by the eminently learned Dr. USHER, Arch-Bishop of Armagh, there is not ascribed to Synodical Conventions any proper Jurisdiction over any Parochial Church. And, whereas some affirm the Diocesan Church to be a single one of the lowest Sort, and that whatever Power, Authority or Jurisdiction belongs to a particular Church of the lowest Rank belongs to the Diocesan Church; now This the famous Dr. BARROW has endeavoured to prove to be

(b) Burnet. de Fide & Officiis Christianor. Cap. 9.

Independent: So that, if the Bounds of particular Churches be made *Parochial*, it must needs follow, that what is said to belong to the *Diocesan Church* must be seated in the *Parish Church*. And, if so, what will become of the *superiour juridical Power*? And the worthy Reforming Bishops CRANMER, TONSTAL and others, being required to give their Opinion concerning the *Authority of General Councils*, freely declared, that this Authority did not flow from the Number of the Bishops, but the Matter of their Decisions: So that by this, they could never by their Authority make an indifferent Thing to become a Duty: But, as GROTIUS expresses it, *prætant ipsi Judicio directivo*, they may shew Men what they apprehend to be Sin and Duty; not, like *Parliaments*, make any Thing sinful or a Duty which was not so before. — But having occasionally mention'd GROTIUS, I would take the Occasion here to mention it, that [in his Book *De Imperio Sum. Potestatis* p. 168.] he has fully proved that there was never a truly General Council called, excepting that at Jerusalem; that Councils have no governing or legislative Power by Divine Right, and that what was written in Synods for the sake of Order are not called Laws, but Canons, and have the Force of Advice only, or oblige by Way of Consent and Agreement. But to return, I would cite a Passage from the learned Mr. RICHARD HOOKER, wherein he delivers, not only his own particular Judgment, but, as he apprehended, the Judgment of the Church of England: The Passage of this zealous Assertor of the Church's Authority to which I refer, is to be seen in his celebrated Book of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and is as follows; I grant, says he, that Proof derived from the Authority of Man's Judgment is not able to work that Assurance, which doth grow by a stronger Proof; and therefore, altho' ten thousand General Councils should set down one and the same definitive Sentence concerning any Point of Religion whatsoever, yet one demonstrative Reason alledged or one Testimony cited from

from the Word of GOD Himself to the Contrary could not refuse but overfway them all: Inasmuch as for them to be deceived it is not so impossible, as it is that Demonstrative Reason or Divine Testimony should deceive. And yet, after all, it is of very little Consequence unto us, who are for or against a Juridical Power in Synods or Councils: It is enow for us, that we have weighty and unto us sufficient and satisfactory Reasons against allowing such a Power unto them. And the Reasons, which have moved these Churches to give into these Sentiments, are such as these: We know, that our Lord JESUS CHRIST is the supreme Teacher sent from GOD, and that His Word is the supreme Law of Christians, altogether infallible, and that therefore our last Appeal ought to be to that: We think, that all the Power, which any Servants of CHRIST ought to have in the Churches, is ministerial only, and not Prætorian: Our Opinion is, that, if the Embassadors of earthly Princes may not exceed the Instructions of their Masters, much less may any Ministers, or Embassadors of the Prince of Peace go beyond the Directions of their great LORD and Master: It is our Judgment, that, if the Determinations of Councils be founded upon the Opinions of Men, weak and fallible Men, and not upon the Truth of GOD's Word, the blessed God would be contrary to HIMSELF: For how can it be consistent for Him, to define and appoint one Thing in the Scripture, and to determine otherwise in a Council? And, in fine, We are confirmed in these our Sentiments from the Practice of all lawful Councils: For we find in the Apostolical Council, JAMES answered, saying, Men and Brethren, hearken to me: SIMEON hath declared, how GOD at first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a People for his Name: And to this agree the Words of the Prophets, as in Act. XV. 14 and 15. And, agreeable to this, has bin the Practice of other approved Councils: For, so says ATHANASIUS, in the Council of Nice, the Faith of the Fathers, was

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delivered

delivered according to the Scriptures (c): And AMBROSIO expresses himself to the same Effect (d): And we find that the Milevitan Council decides the Controversies raised by PELAGIUS only from the sacred Scripture. And other Councils besides have followed the same Method.

But, if any Councils should swerve from the Scriptural Directions and Rules, still we should appeal to the Law and to the Testimony and consult the Mind of our Heavenly Father in His unerring Oracles: So BRENTIUS thought; and therefore, when COCHLÆUS, in urging the Invocation of Saints, pleaded, that *what the Church our Mother had said upon this Matter was to be heard*, BRENTIUS made this wise Reply, *What, said He, if my good Father hath commanded me otherwise! Quid si Pater diversum præcipiat!*

Some of our Brethren, we are fully sensible, think it not enow for Councils to persuade and give Advice, but want something more for them; nor can they be pleased, unless they have them clothed with a binding juridical Power: But to these our Brethren it is sufficient to say, that, if they would have this Power of binding and giving Law in indifferent Things, they are for exceeding the Bounds of the Commission which was given to the Apostles themselves: And a larger Commission than theirs cannot with any Modesty be challenged by Elders, Synods or Churches. But, if this binding Power be desired and pleaded for only in Essential Matters, then we may proceed and argue thus, that, as Synods may meet to communicate Light and Peace to such Persons or Churches as are erroneous or contentious, they may also at the same Time have Power not only to give Light and Counsel, but likewise to require them in the Name of JESUS CHRIST to attend and conform to the same: But, after all, we must suppose that the

Decrees

(c) Athanas. in Epist. ad Episc. Episc. Corinth.

(d) Ambros. de Fide ad Gratian. l. 1. cap. 8.

Decrees and Results of Councils are formed upon Scriptural Grounds: And, if so, then all the Authority, to which Synods may pretend, is only declarative: And then this Question will unavoidably arise, whether the Passages, upon which their Decrees and Results were founded, were well understood and properly applied or no? And, if it shall be honestly conceived, that they had not a good Understanding of the Scriptures, then, according to all the Principles of Reason and of Protestantism, their Decrees can have no such binding Authority: If therefore Infallibility be a pure Cheat, the Pretence of a binding juridical Authority in Councils and Synods must be so too; and such an unnatural Consequence of Ecclesiastical Power in any Hands whatsoever must be entirely unreasonable.

Many, we are aware, are forward to contend, that Councils and Synods are not so liable to err as particular Churches, and that therefore Appeals should in all Cases be preferred unto them: This is the Reason, which the celebrated RUTHERFURD gives for such Appeals? And, if this be the Reason of such Appeals, it will then follow, that the greatest Assemblies should err the seldomest, inasmuch as they have most Eyes, and so Appeals should be frequently made in difficult Cases unto them: So that, by this Rule, all Matters of Importance will be brought before General and Oecumenical Councils: And what shall we say to these plausible Arguings?

In Answer to them, I could argue and urge it, that according to this Method and Rule of Proceeding, Causes would be too long depending, and probably would never come to an Issue: Whereas we think, that our blessed SAVIOUR has made a better Provision for His Churches than this: But, instead of pressing this Argument, I would observe, that whole Synods and General Councils are as liable to deceive and be deceived and imposed on as particular Churches.

This is evident from Fact; For not to insist concerning the Members and Managements of that famous Synod, which the good old PAREUS wanted so much

to see (f). I would not maintain here, that the Churches could not well be represented by them, inasmuch as the Synod consisted of *Seventeen Delegates* who were appointed not by the Churches, but by the *Orders General of the united Provinces*, and of *Eighty three Ministers or Elders or Divines of the united Provinces* and from foreign Parts. Nor would I dwell upon the Testimony of Dr. *BALCANQUAL*, that he must needs say the Remonstrants had no Favour shown them (g). Much less would I mention the Declaration of *EPISCOPUS* concerning Them before the Synod, that They were brought forth *tanquam in publici Oculis Victimæ* (h), as Victims of the publick Hatred. These are tender Points: And I therefore let them go. Yet I cannot omit one Thing determined in this Synod: By This I mean the Decree of the Synod concerning the Question moved by those of *Amsterdam* about the *Baptism of a Child born of Ethnic Parents*. Now this Decision consisted of two Parts: The first concerned *Adults*, and was this, that such as were of Years and Capacity should be diligently taught and catechized, and then, if they did desire it, they should be baptized: The second concerned *Infants*, and it was, that until they came to Years of Discretion they should by no Means be baptized: Upon which Decree the memorable and judicious Mr. *HALES*, who was a Member of the Synod, writes to the Right Honourable My Lord Ambassador *CARLTON*, *A strange Decision*, and such as, if my Memory or Reading fails me not, no Church either ancient or modern ever gave (i). — But not to dwell upon what was amiss in this Synod, or in any other, I proceed to write concerning the Errors, Mistakes and Miscon-

(f) *O utinam mihi daretur in ultima jam Senectute videri hanc Synodum conspicari. Parai. Epist. ad Synod. in Act. Synod.*

(g) Dr. *Balcanqual's* Letters from the Synod in the Remains of Mr. *Hales*.

(h) *Episcopi. Ora. inter Acta Synodalia.*

(i) See *Hales's* Remains.

duct of some of the Conventions, which they call General Councils.

Now it is certain and undoubted, that there was a remarkable Cheat put upon the whole General Council at *Ariminum* by VALENS and URSAIUS and some few other Eastern Bishops, who in the Decree of the *Nicene Council* read *omnious* for *omnious* (e). And it is also evident from Fact, that some of the greatest Councils may use many mean and trickish Arts: Such to be sure were used in the great Council at *Basil* in the Year 1431, which ended in the Year 1442, in which the *Bohemians* for four Days pleaded four Articles, namely, the Sacraments in both Kinds, correcting public Crimes, Liberty to preach GOD's Word, and concerning the Civil Power of the Clergy: And in this famous Council, after many Petitions and some fair Promises and hopeful Approaches upon them, the *Bohemians* could not obtain their Desire in one Instance: but Tricks were continually devised to elude their Hopes and Expectations, and Inconveniences that would follow upon such Concessions powerfully argued. — And Father PAUL of *Venice*, like a wise and honest Man, has plainly declar'd the many Quirks and Tricks of the accursed Cabal, commonly called the Council of *Trent*.

And that General Councils are not infallible, may be easily demonstrated from undoubted Histories: Thus, the largest Council that ever was known established *Arianism*: And thus That, which the Papists call the *Seventh General Council*, was such an one, that the good and excellent Dr. TILLOTSON remark'd concerning it, that if a General Council of Atheists had met together with a Design to abuse Religion by talking ridiculously concerning it, they could not have done it more effectually (k). Thus in the third Council of the *Lateran* it

(e) *Jerom. advers. Lucifer.*

(k) *Tillotson's Rule of Faith, p. 251.*

was decreed, that all Princes who favored Hereticks should forfeit their Rights, and a full Indulgence was allowed to all that fought against them. And, in the fourth Council at the same Place, it was decreed, that the Pope might declare this Forfeiture and absolve their Subjects from their Oath of Allegiance and so transfer their Dominions unto others. In the first Council at Lyons they joined with the Pope in deposing the Emperor RICHARD the first by a Sentence against him. And in the Council of Constance, which LUTHER judged to be most deserving of Reproach (a), it was decreed, that the Faith [or Promise] of safe Conduct was not to be kept with an Heretic, that should come to the Place of Judgment, relying upon it, &c.

We may say therefore, and bring the Confession of an English Synod in HERBERT'S History to vouch for our saying it, that there is not, nor can be any Thing in the World more pestilent or pernicious to the Commonwealth of Christendom, or whereby the Truth of GOD'S Word hath bin in Times past, or may be sooner defaced or subverted, or whereof may ensue more Contention or Discord or other Devilish Effects, than when General Councils have bin or shall be hereafter assembled, not christianly nor charitably, but upon worldly or carnal Considerations. And we may take leave to add, that the Observation which Dr. WAKE, the late learned Arch-Bishop of Canterbury has made concerning some Synods will hold good concerning all General Councils also, namely, that "there is hardly any Thing in Antiquity, which either
" more exposed our Christian Profession heretofore, or
" may more deserve our serious Consideration at this
" Day, than the Violence, the Passion, the Malice, the
" Falseness and the Oppression, which reigned in most of
" the Synods held by CONSTANTINE and the following
" Emperors". Thus he. And Dr. BURNET justly

(a) Concilio Constantiensis Contumelia Dignissima. Luther. Pref. Epist. J. Hufi.

observes, that the Writers of the fourth and fifth Centuries give us dismal Representations of the Councils of those Times. And besides, there is Reason to think that Truth and Right may sometimes be found with one single Person as soon as in a Council: So CYPRIAN, in his Seventy first Epistle, allows, that many Things are better revealed to single Persons: Nay we have a Proof of this in the first Council of Nice, which is reputed the best of any; for there had certainly bin issued a Canon for divorcing married Priests, if the old PAPHNUTUS had not stood up and reasoned against it.

The Church of England has well determined in its nineteenth Article, that the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome have erred in Points of the greatest Consequence: And, in the twenty first Article, that General Councils may err.

But yet, supposing that a General Council were infallible, we must then conclude, that the Church has now lost its Infallibility: For, as there has bin no such Council for many Scores of Years, there is also no Likelihood of another: And, if there might be one, the many Villanies in Trent may sufficiently instruct the World that no Good is to be expected from such a Council.

Upon the whole then; Since even General Councils may trick and be trick'd, and are as liable to err as a Synod or even a particular Church; Mankind must be very stupid indeed to think, that they should have a binding Power and may force their Decrees upon any Society or Person.

But yet, if after all it should be allowed for Argument's sake, that such Councils were infallible and all their Decrees were entirely agreeable to the Mind of GOD; it will not nevertheless appear, that they have any juridical Power at all: For, if we grant them a Doctrinal Power, by which they could unerringly clear up the Mind of GOD our SAVIOUR, still the Power of Jurisdiction, as has bin already explained, would remain in the

The particular Churches, wherein CHRIST JESUS has placed the same: And indeed this is no more than what that excellent Presbyterian Mr. RUTHERFURD is ready to acknowledge, as I have before quoted him.

In fine; The Way of these Churches has bin, and it is the best Way that can be observed, to enquire where our blessed SAVIOUR has placed the last Censuring and final Determination of Causes: And, having found this, they ought to rest contented: Councils and Synods, when Advice and Assistance is needed, may be used by them; but it is not either their not Erring at all or their Erring more rarely, that is a sufficient Reason for placing any Power of Jurisdiction in them, unless our great LORD and Master has ordered that they shall have such a Power: But, as yet, this does not appear.

Wherefore it is to be hoped, that the Brethren in these Churches will always maintain their Right to sit and act in Councils and Synods; but yet that they will never think of placing any juridical Power in them, but will always continue to assert the Powers and Privileges of particular Churches, which are sacred Things, by no means to be slighted and undervalued, nor to be left at the Mercy of any Classes or Councils, Synods or General Meetings.

I was going to translate and conclude this Chapter with the Translation of some Passages from LUTHER's Preface to the four German Epistles of the worthy JOHN HUSS; but I believe They will sound better in the plain and blunt Language of the Writer, and therefore I chuse to give them as I find them.

— Having mentioned some of the vile and mischievous Consequences of the Council of Constance; He then writes (o), Hi scilicet sunt dulces illi Fructus, quos, Constantiense Concilium tam venerabile, imo execrabile, protulit. Quare merito de Eo Exemplum sumeremus, ne deinceps, si quod Concilium fieret, tam perversis & insanis Asinis—

(o) Luther. ad Fin. Præfat. Epist. J. Huss.

Asinis—Causam Religionis committeremus. Quin imo Imperatoris, Regum, Principum & Episcoporum erit, summa Cura summaque Studio cavere, ne vel similia sent, vel deteriora futuri Concilii Acta. Satis enim, opinor, manifeste DEUS in Concilio illo Constantiensi declaravit, quam non possit ullam ferre Superbiam, quamque sibi jucundum sit dispergere superbos mente Cordis sui, quantumvis etiam illi in hoc Mundo Potentia polleant. Qui igitur, hoc Exemplo edoctus, non vult fieri cautor, et cum a me premonitus sit, liberum esto, ut, facto Periculo, re ipsa Perversitatem illorum experiat. The plain Sense of which Passages, in short, is, that we ourselves and the Rest of the World shall be much to blame, if, after the Observations which have bin made with regard to the Managements of Synods, or General Councils, we shall be so unadvised as to trust them and commit the Cause of Religion to them.



Chap. VIII.



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Chapter VIII.

The Liberty of these Churches to *hold Communion with one another* asserted and proved.

THrough the Favour of our blessed SAVIOUR, *His Churches may hold Communion with one another*: For, altho' no particular Church is subject to another particular Church of however large an Extent, as the Churches in the *united Provinces* have bin so free as to declare with us in the *first Article* of their *Ecclesiastical Constitution*; yet all the Churches may enjoy *mutual and reciprocal Communion* among themselves: And there are *several Ways*, wherein this *Communion* may be regularly and laudably exercised; some of which have in some Measure bin considered or hinted at before; but yet there will be no great Hurt in making a *particular Mention* of them here and giving a fair Description and Recommendation of them.

First of all; *These Churches may partake with one another at the LORD's Table*; and the Members of one Church, coming occasionally to another where the Eucharist is to be administred, may at their Desire be admitted to the Privilege of partaking in that holy Ordinance; provided, that neither *they*, nor *the Churches* to which they belong, are chargeable with any *scandalous Offence*: For we are for receiving the Communion in *all the Assemblies of the Faithful*, as well as in the particular Churches to which we belong; considering the LORD's Supper as the *Seal of our Communion* both with JESUS CHRIST and His faithful People.

Nextly;

Nextly; Encouraged by the Example of the Apostle PAUL, who recommended PHEBE a Member of the Church at Cenchrea to the Church at Rome; these Churches may *recommend their Brethren* to Neighbour Churches, giving a good Testimony concerning them and entreating the Neighbour Churches to receive them to their sacred Fellowship and to watch over them in Brotherly Love: And, if any Brother have real Occasion, either on the Account of his Business or for any other just End and Motive, to *remove with his Family* and take up his Abode in some other Place, and hereupon acquaints the Church to which he belongs of his Purpose and the Grounds of his Removal; the Church may then *write more full Letters of Recommendation* to the Church to which he removes, resigning *him* to their Charge and entreating *them* to *receive him as a Brother* and allow him all the Privileges of the Ecclesiastical State among them: And, when, according to the Tenour of such *Letters recommendatory*, the recommended Brother is *accepted into the Fellowship of the Church*, he is to all Intents and Purposes a Member of that Church; so that he may perform the Duties and enjoy the Privileges of a Member in that Society. — Such *Letters of Recommendation* the Apostle PAUL speaks of in his *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chap. III. Verse 1, as *needful for others*, tho' not for himself. — And besides it is *reasonable in itself*, that none, *without any Recommendations from the Churches* to which they belong, should claim or be allowed the Privileges of Societies to which they have no Relation or do not properly appertain.

Thirdly; If any particular Church, that for a considerable Time has *walked in the Fear of GOD and the Comforts of the HOLY SPIRIT*, has bin *edified and multiplied* to such a Degree as to be overcharged with Members; they may *send forth their Members* that are qualified for it *to enter into an Ecclesiastical State* among themselves: And by the same Reason, if a Number of

Christians should come from foreign Parts to a Place where the Church may be so full that they cannot conveniently join with it, *that Church may warrantably encourage them to enter into an holy Combination among themselves*: For such a *Propagation of Churches* is agreeable to Nature and Reason, consonant with the Practice of the Apostles and indeed necessary for the Enlargement of our SAVIOUR'S Kingdom in all Nations and Generations to the End of the World.

Fourthly; When particular Churches have Occasion of spiritual Refreshment or temporal Succour, Neighbour Churches may afford it: They may furnish them with able Members or spare suitable Officers to them; and, if they can conveniently send such to their indigent Neighbours, they ought with Readiness to impart them: For so, when Tidings came to the Ears of the Church at Jerusalem, [concerning the Success of the Gospel] they sent forth BARNABAS that he should go as far as Antioch, as in Act. XI. 22: And it is entirely fit, that such Churches as are full of useful Members and Officers should be ready from their Fulness to supply the Necessities of their Brethren in other Churches. — And, if any of our Brethren should fall into such poor external Circumstances that they cannot support themselves and the Gospel, it is then our Duty to minister to their Necessities as God shall enable us: For so the Churches of the Gentiles made their liberal Contributions for the poor Saints at Jerusalem, as in Rom. XV. 26 and 27; where also the Reasonableness of their so doing is declared: And to be sure both Reason and Religion challenge it from Churches to do Good and communicate to such Brethren and Churches as are destitute.

Fifthly; These Churches may lawfully consult with one another and ought to do so as Occasion requires: For it is very probable, that other Churches may be better acquainted with Persons and Causes than ourselves; and therefore their Judgment and Counsel ought to be required. Thus particularly, when a new Church is to be gathered,

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or Officers are to be chosen and ordained over any Church, or there is some Difference among the Brethren about the Administration of the Censures of the Churches, it is fit and proper to consult with Neighbour Churches; and Neighbour Churches should be ready to send their Elders and other Delegates to help them with their Advice and Counsel.— And, if any Church should want Light in any Case or should be at Variance, they should desire Neighbour Churches to favour them with their Counsel: Whereupon such Churches, convening by their Elders and other Messengers, may consider the Points in Doubt or in Controversy; and, having according to their best Understanding and Endeavours sought the Way of Truth and Peace, they may communicate by Letters and Messengers their Sentiments and Advice to the Churches whose Case has bin under their attentive and prayerful Consideration, that so, if they see meet, they may conform to the same and be at Peace.

These are some of the Ways and Manners, wherein Churches are to shew their Care of one another and express their Communion with each other: But to these there is another to be added: And the Sixth Way, wherein Churches are to exercise Communion towards one another, is the Way of Communion by Admonition: This is called the third Way of Communion in our Platform of Church-Discipline, Chap. XVth: And, from that Chapter, it appears, that this Method is to be followed, when any public Offence is to be found in a Church, which they either discern not or are slow in proceeding to use the means for the Removing and Healing of it.— I have reserved the Consideration of this Way to this Place, that so I might enlarge upon it, for the Instruction of such as are unacquainted with it, for the confirming of such as are wavering in their Apprehensions about it, and that I might help towards removing the Prejudices of such as have distinguished themselves by their Opposition unto it.

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If therefore there be any Corruption in any Church whether in Doctrine or Manners; a particular Church in the Neighbourhood, having received a credible Account of it and having upon diligent Enquiry found the Report to be true, they send Letters or Messengers or both to the Church wherein such Corruption is arisen and prevailing, and admonish them with Faithfulness and Speed to amend it: If now the Elder or Elders of the Church should be so remiss as not to communicate their Admonition, or should actually be in Fault themselves, the offended Church should acquaint the Brethren of the Church offending with the Fault and exhort them to call upon their Elders to take heed that they fulfil their Ministry which they have received of the LORD: If the Church shall hear the Admonition and remove the Scandal, the Process stops: But, if the corrupt and peccant Church hear not their Brethren; the Church, which has bin offended and continues to be grieved, then takes the Help of two or three more Churches, that so the Admonition dispensed may by them be jointly enforced: And, if the Church lying under public Offence still persist both in the Neglect of their Duty and their Slight of the good Counsel and Admonition of their Brethren; those Churches may forbear Communion with the offending Church in such Exercises as Churches usually maintain towards each other; and they are to make Use of the Help of a Synod or a large Council of Congregational Churches for their Conviction: And, if they bear not this Synod or Council, the Council or Synod having declared them obstinate and impenitent in Scandal, particular Churches approving and accepting the Judgment of the Synod or Council, are to declare the Sentence of Non-Communion respectively concerning them, and thereupon, out of a religious Care to keep their own Communion pure, they may justly withdraw themselves from Participation with them at the LORD's Table and from such other Acts of Fellowship as are otherwise allow'd and required by the Communion of Churches: But however due Care

is to be taken in such a Process, that the *Innocent* may not suffer with the *Offensive*: For, while the *peccant Party* is to be deprived of the *Privilege of Communion* with these Churches, those particular Members of the offending Church, who do not consent to the Offence of the Church but in due Sort bear their Testimony against it, may be received to wonted Communion in the Churches, and, after due Waiting in the Use of Means for healing the Offence of the Church, may withdraw from the Communion of their own Church, with the Allowance of the Council of Neighbour Churches, and upon offering themselves to the Communion of another Church, may be lawfully received by that Church, as if they had bin regularly dismiss'd unto them from their own Church continuing still in Offence.

This is what is commonly called *the third Way of Communion* in these Churches, but it would be better understood perhaps, if we called it *the Way of Communion by Admonition*. It must be acknowledged to the Glory of GOD our SAVIOUR, that, altho' this Disciplinary Process has bin several Times undertook with offending Churches, these Churches have but rarely bin put to the utmost Extent of their Duty: For there has hardly bin a Church so daringly wicked as to hold out in maintaining the Corruptions and Offences found among them: But, whenever it does fall out, it is as much the Duty of these Churches thus to be faithful to each other as it is the Duty of Brethren in the same Church or Communion to be faithful to one another: For these Churches enjoy Brotherly Communion with one another, as well as Brethren of the same Church. The Apostles had the Care of all the Churches: But it is to be hoped, that the public Spirit of Love and Peace and Christian Faithfulness is not dead with them: There is not, it is true, so much of this Spirit as there ought to be: But, wherever it resides or reigns in Churches, they will have a watchful Eye over other Churches for their Benefit, and a tender Care and Concern for their best

best Interests, and will pursue the same in the *Disciplinary Method*, which has bin described, as there shall be Occasion for it.

I am very sensible, that many Persons, and especially Clergymen, are averse to a Compliance in the least with this *Process of Discipline*, and that for this Reason; because they do not know any such Thing as a *Consociation of Churches* among us: So that, inasmuch as they do not know that there is any express *Agreement of the Churches to conform to such a Process*, they cannot think that every Church is obliged to regard the *Determination of a Synod* in such a Case.

In Answer to which Pretence, I would say, that it is doubtless a Mistake to declare, that there is no such Thing as a *Consociation of Churches* among us: For our *Platform of Church-Discipline* is to be deemed a *Covenant*, by which all our Churches and every Member in them is obliged to conform to the Rules, Directions and Orders laid down in it: And for the Proof of this I would observe, that this *Platform* was composed by these Churches in a Body Representative: So that the plain Sense and Meaning of the Composers must be, that they engaged to conform to the Rules and Orders of it, and that they would have their Successors, as well as themselves, directed and governed by them. Nor can I help observing, that *Approbation (u)* of our *Platform* was voted unanimously by the Elders and Brethren of our Churches; and there was not so much as one appear'd, when

(u) This must not be understood, as if they absolutely bound themselves to a perpetual Conformity unto it: For our pious Fathers renounced all Attachment to any mere human Systems or Forms, and reserved an entire and perpetual Liberty for particular Christians and particular Churches to search the inspired Records and to form both their Principles and Practices from those Discoveries they should make therein, without imposing them upon others; as you may see by consulting the *New England Chronology* of the ingenious Mr. PRINCE: I have refer'd to the Pages in the Appendix to this Apology.

when the Vote was put in the Negative in the Synod on Sept. 10. 1679.

And besides, that this Order of Church-Discipline is to be deemed an holy Paſt or Covenant, we may argue from thoſe Synods and Councils which have met here by Vertue of it and maintained constant Fellowſhip in many federal overt Acts: For, from theſe foederal overt Acts of Councils and Synods from Time to Time, it is pretty manifeſt, that theſe Churches have all along maintained their firſt Principles of Church-Discipline and ſo have tranſmitted the Covenant which they made to ſucceeding Generations.

Furthermore; It may be remarked, that in the Settlement of new Churches, in the Ordination of Officers in the ſame Churches, and in giving the Right Hand of Fellowſhip, of the Fellowſhip of the Churches, from Time to Time, theſe Churches have ſo often plainly, ſignificantly and formally renewed their Original Paſt or Covenant.

And it may, moreover, be mention'd, that even ſuch Perſons, as have made this Objection, when they can find any Thing in our Platform of Church-Discipline ſuited to their own Humours and Inclinations and that will be ſerviceable for a Turn or emergent Occaſion, are very ready to cite, improve and conform to it: And this ſeems to afford ſome Evidence, as if they themſelves look'd upon it as a ſtanding and general Compact, until the Churches ſhall agree to alter it.

Theſe Hints are ſufficient to render it probable, and more than probable, that there is here a Conſociation of Churches, and that between theſe Churches there is ſtill a mutual Conſociation: But, if to pleaſe ſome of our good Brethren it ſhould be allow'd, that there is no ſuch Compact between theſe Churches, nor any Conſociation of them; ſtill it may be proved with Eaſe, that ſuch a Proceſs of Discipline, as has but now bin explained, ought to be obſerved in theſe Churches.

I shall not here cite any Authority for the Proof of this; intending in an Appendix to this Book to reprint something referring to this Matter from Dr. INCREASE MATHER's, my Grandfather's, *Vindication of the Order of the Churches in New-England*; but I shall briefly mention a Consideration or two, which will be sufficient to *establish this Process of Discipline* in the good Opinion of all such as are the true Friends of these Churches.

First of all; This Process is entirely agreeable to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, as well as the Reason of Mankind: For what is it for one Church to admonish another on the Account of something judg'd to be amiss in their Society? It is only for a Neighbour Minister, or Elder, with a few of his Christian Brethren to pay a Visit to the Neighbour Church and humbly advise and exhort them to seek for the Restoration of Peace and to rectify their Errors whether in Judgment or Action. How rational and how Evangelical is this Method? What Assuming, what Domineering is there to be found in this? Truly, notwithstanding the frightful Dress in which this Process is represented, there is nothing more Authoritative in it, than one Brother's admonishing another, according to the Rules of the Gospel as well as of right Reason.

Again; This Method is well calculated for preserving the Reputation and Honour of particular Churches: For, as particular Christians, so particular Churches, are but Men and by Consequence are liable to Errors: But yet, as all Christians make an high Profession and therefore should be careful lest there should be any slur upon it; even so all particular Churches, which are corporate Societies making a splendid Profession of Christianity, ought carefully to maintain their Social Honour: And therefore, as with particular Christian Brethren, so with particular Churches, fallen into Errors and Scandals, it would be wrong and injurious to take at once precipitate and open Measures: Nor indeed would exposing their Character openly at first be either a regular

or a probable Method of effecting their Amendment. Wherefore, in order to preserve the Reputation and Honour of these Churches, it is vastly better, I mean more rational and scriptural, in the first place, to follow this private Method, to which by our Constitution also we are directed, than as the Manner of some is to bring the Affairs of a Church before a Council and to a public Hearing at once.

And, in fine, If this Disciplinary Method be not carefully observed, these Churches have no Remedy at all against Male-Administrations in particular Churches: For I cannot find, that by the Constitution of these Churches the Power of calling Councils belongs to any particular Persons in them, but to the Churches themselves: So that, according to this Constitution, if there be Male-Administration in any particular Church, the Aggrieved Members of it may not convoke such Assemblies: But they should desire the Advice and Assistance of a Neighbour Church: And, unless one particular Church interpose in this State of Things and enquire into the Case in the Way of Communion by Admonition, particular Churches may remain at eternal Variance within themselves without shewing our Dislike of their Proceedings: For there is no other Process that we know of in the publish'd Order of our Churches, by which we can testify against them, but in this Disciplinary Method.

But, after all, some of our good Brethren will continue displeased with this Process of Discipline from a peaceable Disposition, as should seem from their Discourse about it: For they say, that they cannot by any means approve of this Disciplinary Method; because the Prosecution of it will occasion great Disturbance and Confusion in Churches.

But, for Answer to these Persons, it may be worth the while to expostulate a little with them: Say then, Dear Brethren, why do you think that this Process should occasion more Trouble and Confusion than the

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Method of calling a Council by a few particular Persons, or even by one Person, dissatisfied or aggrieved? Or is it, because your own Administrations have bin irregular or unsuitable, that you are therefore disaffected to this Process, from a prevalent Fear of Examination according to it? However, is not this Disciplinary Method so plainly prescribed in the Constitution of particular Congregational Churches that we must be Brownists or Nothing if we recede from it? And, in fine, if it should be so, as you say, that Churches will be disturbed in the Prosecution of this Method; yet can we suppose, that some Disturbance of the Churches in a sleepy and indolent State would be amiss and undesirable, if a more establish'd Order and a more comely Amendment may be occasion'd thro' this Disturbance in the Churches? Pray, dear Brethren, answer these Questions in the Spirit of Meekness, as they are proposed; that so, if our Fathers erred in the Prescription of this Method, the Churches may regularly use their Endeavours to get their Error rectified.

Upon the whole, and from the best Observations which I have bin able to make; I am free to declare my Apprehension, and I hope my Brethren will not be offended with me for making this Declaration, that the Neglect and Slight of this Rule of Discipline by the Pastors and Churches in this Government has bin the true Reason, if not the sole Cause, of the Disturbances and Confusions in many of our Churches, and that, as the great VOET observed with respect to the Want of Correspondence among the Churches, I fear it much: Time will shew what will happen, when the Number of Churches is greatly encreased, and one will not bear another (x). Nay, without the Spirit

(x) *Nol. — Nondicus certare, quamdiu bene se habent: Non equidem invideo; metuo magis; & Dies docebit quid futurum sit, n'ti in ingentem Numerum excreverint & OUDEIS OUDENOS AKOUSH. Voet. Par. III. L. I. Tract. III. Cap. V.*

of Prophecy, I may venture to say, that, if this Method be neglected, those Things will fall and perish sooner than we imagine, which we thought and believed to be firm and lasting (x). And I cannot therefore but wish to God, that the great Head of the Church might so influence the Minds and Hearts of these Churches as to bring them to an entire Approbation of true Congregationalism, and of this Disciplinary Process in particular, by which alone Congregational Churches can be distinguished from such as are Brownistical.



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(z) *Nisi in Ecclesia valeat Admonitio & in quotidiano usu sit Correctio, Citius quam ipsi putemus collabuntur & intereunt ea quoque quæ firmissima credebantur. Bullinger. Decad V. Serm. X. De Institutis Ecclesiæ.*

THE CONCLUSION, *in a brief* *Address to the Churches of* NEW- ENGLAND.

THUS I have endeavoured to state and vindicate the more distinguishing Liberties of the Churches in *New-England*. As these Privileges have bin purchased by the Blood of the LORD JESUS, they ought to be very precious in our Esteem, nor upon any Pretence whatsoever to be slighted and undervalued by the happy People who enjoy them.

It is worthy to be always remembered by these Churches, that it was not on the Account of any *peculiar Sentiments in Doctrinal Matters* that our wise and good Fathers left their Native Countrey and came into this then howling Wilderness: For they agreed to the *Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England as much as the Conformists to that Parliamentary Church*, and indeed much more so than most of them: But it was from a pure Respect to *Ecclesiastical Discipline and Order* and to a more refined Worship, that those excellent Men our Ancestors transported themselves, with their Families, into this Land.

The Church of *Rome*, as far as in them lies, have divested our great SAVIOUR of His Prophetical, Sacerdotal and Kingly Offices: Other Churches have bin so far overcome by the Light of Reason and Revelation, that they have restored as one may say His Sacerdotal Office to Him and His Prophetical Office also: But our gracious Predecessors, observing that their Brethren in *England* were not willing to allow our Lord JESUS CHRIST to be the King and Ruler of His Church, nobly resolv'd,

as the Children of Zion, to acknowledge and rejoyce in their King: And hence they quitted their ungrateful Countrey, that so they might observe that *resin'd Wor-ship and Order* which their LORD and Sovereign had in His Word appointed to be observed.

It follows therefore, that any *Degeneracies from the pure Worship and Scriptural Order* in these Churches would be a direct *Rejection of the Kingly Authority of CHRIST JESUS*, and a Means of setting up another King or Captain to lead us backward, in the Steps we have taken from Babylon, towards it again: May GOD of His rich Grace therefore preserve these Churches from any such Degeneracies!

It is evident indeed, that great Pains are taken to draw our People, especially our inconsiderate young People, who are too unmindful of the King and GOD of their Fathers, from their Love and Attachment to those first Principles of these Churches, which I have bin explaining and enforcing: But, as NABOTH said to AHAB concerning his Vineyard, in 1 King. XXI. 3, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto Thee; even so it is fit, that we should say to such as would entice us to part with the pure Order of these Churches, *This was our Father's Inheritance*: And GOD forbid, that any should persuade us to give up our inestimable Rights: For the very Thought of parting with them is shocking.

Dear People, The Liberties, which have bin challeng'd for you, are the same as the Brethren in the Times of primitive Christianity enjoyed for *hundreds of Years* together: And, whatever specious Pretences some may make to the contrary, the *Dispossessing of the Brethren* of these their valuable Liberties was a *considerable Instance of the Romish Apostocy*: And indeed they have but a slender Acquaintance with Ecclesiastical History who do not know, that the *Rise of Popery* was owing to the *People's tamely giving up their Rights and Privileges*, either thro' Ignorance or Imprudence, to

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the Clergy, who unreasonably engross'd to themselves and grasp'd in their own Clutches all Things in the Churches that were of any Worth and Importance.

There can be no Doubt, that there are many who are *sworn and inveterate Enemies to the pure Order* in these Churches; and, besides these, we have Reason to think that there are *many false Friends* to it; by which Sort I mean those that *pretend some Regard to the Order of the Gospel* in these Churches, but yet at the same Time would gladly subvert it: And it is well, if there are not *sundry Ministers* in these Churches, who are disaffected to it: For, as LUTHER has somewhere remark'd concerning Religion, *Nunquam magis periclitur quam inter Reverendissimos*; so it may be said with respect to *the Order* in these Churches: *Probably it may be in most Danger from some of the Reverend Body.*—But surely all such in these Churches are very unadvised and blameworthy: And, if they are not duely *sensible of the Tendency of their Disaffection and Undertakings*, it is a Pity but their Brethren should, and carefully guard against them. And truely there cannot any Good be expected from them: For, as they do not produce a *better Discipline and purer Order* for our Churches in the Room of that, which they unreasonably dislike and would throw away; so, if they could produce and offer a *better Order*, which indeed is very unlikely, there is no rational Prospect of its gaining Ground among us, but with that *Disturbance and Confusion in our Churches*, of which they at other Times are exceedingly fearful. But,

These Enemies to our *Ecclesiastical Discipline and Order* seem as if they knew not what they would have. The Scheme, which they would promote, is very far from *Presbyterial*: For, if one may judge by their Conduct, they seem to be fond of *one Minister's Ruling and Governing his own Church* without the Consent of the Brethren or any Elders in Conjunction with him: Whereas the *London Ministers*, in their *Vindication of*

the Presbyterial Government, say, that for one Minister to assume such Power unto himself is to make himself a Congregational Pope.— Dear Brethren, let not these petty Popes then deprive you of your just Rights and invaluable Privileges: But, like your worthy Ancestors, continue fond of them: For it will be creditable and praise-worthy not to let them go: And it will, in the Style of PLINY, be a most honest Thing to follow the Footsteps of our Ancestors, if they have gone before us in a right Path (a).

And, when you observe any, who value themselves upon their Contempt of your establish'd Order and who often speak slightly of your Platform of Church-Discipline which is the Sum of it, Dear Brethren, Set a Mark upon these Persons; remembring, that better and wiser Men than they, even those worthy and famous Presbyterians, who publish'd their *Jus Divinum* about Eighty Years since, freely declare, that they agree with the Things of the greatest Concernment in it, and that their Debates about some Things of lesser Consequence were not [Contentiones] warm Disputes, but [Collationes] Friendly Conferences.

And, in fine, Much Honour'd and entirely Belov'd Churches; be pleased to accept of this Attempt of one, the most unworthy of your Sons, who, being set for the Defence of the Order of the Gospel among you, has endeavour'd to illustrate and confirm that Order in its primitive Purity for your Advantage, and, from his Faithfulness to your best Interests, has dared to expose himself to many Misrepresentations, if not Reproaches and Abuses: And wherein he has fail'd of giving the true Sense of his and your Fathers, tho' from a diligent Search of their Meaning in Manuscripts and printed Composures he has endeavour'd it, be pleased to im-

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(a) *Honestissimum Majorum Vestigia Sequi, si recto Itinere Præcesserint.* Plin. Epist. 8. l. 1.

pute it to humane Frailty and undesigned Mistaking:
For into these alone his Failing must be resolved.

Ut desint Vires, tamen est laudanda Voluntas:

Hac Ego [contentum] auguror esse [Deum.]

Ovid. de Pont. L. III. Eleg. 4.

The END of the Apology.



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The APPENDIX

To the *Apology for the Churches* in New-England.

Part the first, containing some *Evidences and Specimens of the Catholic and Comprehensive Principles of the New-English Churches.*

IN the *Thirty-fourth* Page of the *Preliminary Discourse concerning CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES* I have observed, that, not only our *Houses and Hearts*, but our *Churches* also, are open to *Baptists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians*, when in a Judgment of Charity we have Reason to think them of good Understanding, Piety and Vertue. Now, for the Proof of This, I shall recite some Particular, and then some more General Testimonies to the Truth of it,

Number I.

I Have a Letter in my Hands, and the very Original Letter, of the learned and pious and facetious Mr. CHARLES MORTON of *Charles-Town* in *New-England*; a Letter to the Right Honourable HUGH BOSCAWEN, Esq; which, as it gives a large and true

Account of the Countrey and Churches in *New-England*, I had some Thoughts of Printing: But, finding that it will take up more Room than can well be allow'd, I shall therefore only select a few Paragraphs from it. And, if any upon the Sight of These should want to see the Remainder of the Letter, I would here acquaint them, that I have it in my Library and shall be ready to give them the Sight of it. The Paragraphs are as follow:

— Give me Leave, Sir, to acquaint you, that I am now in a Countrey, which has bin a friendly *Asylum* to me: It gave me a kind Reception, when my Native Land did in a Manner push me out. — It's my humble Petition to your Honour, that you would become a vigorous Patron for the People of God in these remote Lands. — God has a great *People* here, an *able and pious Ministry*, and a great many *well order'd Churches*. Their *Church Government* is *interpendant*, as their witty Mr. WARD called it. — I have bin called to some of their *Councils* and have seen their good Effect in healing the Breaches of disturbed Churches. Their *Ordination* to the public Ministry is solemn by the Pastors of Neighbour Churches: And, tho' their Custom has bin a new Imposition of Hands upon every new Call to the Exercise of the Ministry; yet to us, who came from *Europe*, Mr. BAYLEY and myself, it was abated. And, for ought I can perceive, *they mind more the Substance of Religion than the Circumstances of some Men's private Opinions*(x). Their *public Worship* in Praying, Singing and Preaching is plain, but grave and solemn, and, I hope, sincere. — The Influence of a Religious Profession upon common and outward Conversation is very great: So that lewd Profaneness did never openly appear, till a wretched Crew of Frigateers and Red Coats came among us. — I write not all this,

(x) It was principally for the Sake of this Passage in *Italy*, that I have transcribed such a Part of this Letter.

as if Men were here perfect: For then there were no need of Magistracy, Ministry or Gospel Ordinances for their Edification: But certainly, Sir, if God has a People on the Face of the Earth and any Part of the World may be called *Emanuel's Land, New-England* may well put in for a notable Share in that Denomination. — If your Honour will afford your Assistance to these Gentlemen, I hope you will never have Cause to repent it. God has heretofore blessed the Friends of *New-England* and blasted all her Adversaries. May the God of Heaven so establish your Affairs, as may raise the Hopes of us your Dependants! May His Wisdom guide your Counsels and His Power be your Protection, that we with you may rejoyce in the LORD. So daily prayeth your Honour's most humble and many Ways obliged Servant,

Feb. 3. 1689, -90.

CHARLES MORTON,

Numb. II.

THE next Testimony shall be from my own Father, who, in a Letter to Mr. FRANCIS DE LA PILLONNIERE, which was printed in *The Occasional Paper*, but never printed and generally known in *New-England*, writes in the following Manner.

—The Truth is, the Reformation that came on, when the *Romish Antichrist* had pass'd thro' his Time, and his *Two Times*, and was entering into his *Half-Time*, was little better than an *Half-Reformation*.

The Reforming Churches, flying from *Rome*, carried, some of them more, some of them less, all of them something, of *Rome*, with them; especially in that Spirit of *Imposition*, and *Persecution*, which has too much cleaved unto them ALL.

The Period hastens for a *New Reformation*; wherein 'tis likely that our holy Lord will, in some Degree, reject

reject ALL the *Parties* of Christians at this Day in the World; and form a NEW PEOPLE of the good Men in the *several Parties*, who shall unite in the Articles of their Goodness, and sweetly bear with one another in their lesser Differences; leaving each other to the Divine Illuminations.

PIETY will anon be the only *Basis of Union*, in the Churches of the revived, refined, reformed Reformation; and pious Men, in several Forms, will come to Love, and live, as Brethren; and the purged Floor of our Saviour will be visited with Tokens of his Presence, that shall be very comfortable.

It is thus very much in my Country; and therefore, Sir, if *Old England* prove too torrid a Climate for you, come over to *New-England*, where I will do my best, that you shall be treated with more Christian Civilities.

But I hope that our Lord will find greater Employments for you in *Europe*, than can be expected on the Western Side of the *Atlantick*. He has qualify'd you for them, and, I hope, what you have seen among some very *Defective Protestants* will animate you to them.

Being my self a *Calvinist*, I must needs differ pretty much from a Gentleman who professes himself an *Arminian*. But I consider what those *Maxims of Piety* are, which engage the *Arminian* to maintain his distinguishing Positions. Those *Maxims* are, *That* the Holy and Sin-hating Lord must not be reproach'd as the Impeller of the Sin, whereof he is the *Revenger*: *That* our Merciful Father must not be blasphemed, as if He dealt after an illusory manner with Men, when He invites them to His Mercy: *That* none, among the Fallen Race of the *First Adam*, are to be shut out from the Hopes of Life, in the Death of the *Second Adam*: *That* impenitent Unbelievers must not cast on God the Blame of their Unbelief; but the Wicked must lay wholly on themselves the Fault of their own Destruction: And, *That* Men must work out their

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own Salvation with as much Industry, and Agony, and Vigilancy, as if all turned upon their own Will and Care, whether they shall be saved, or no. Now, these are *Maxims*, which every pious *Calvinist* will also most heartily consent unto. And, if I should repeat the *Maxims of Piety*, which make me fall in with the Positions of a *Calvinist*, as requisite unto the supporting of them. I am confident the pious Mr. *de la Pillonniere* would most heartily subscribe unto them. And we shall both of us have the Modesty to confess, that we have also to do with Matters which are to us incomprehensible. Now, if good Men are so united in the *Maxims*, which are the END, for the serving whereof they declare that they pursue their Controversies; why should not this *Uniting Piety* put an End unto their Controversies? and beat *their Swords into Plough-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks?*

Numb. III.

BUT, to these more particular Testimonies concerning the Catholic and comprehensive Principles of these Churches from a superior Regard to *the Substance of Religion*, I would take Leave to subjoin and mention some more *General ones*.

The famous DURY, whose Heart was very much set upon a Pacification among *Protestants*, having made his proposed Tour in *Europe* for promoting it, at length wrote a Letter to his Brethren in *New-England* to know their Sentiments concerning such a Pacification; which Letter occasioned the following noble Answer to it, that was written by the great Mr. NORTON, Pastor of the first Church in *Boston, New-England*, at the Desire of all the Ministers of this [then] *Colony*, and afterwards signed by them all. I have here reprinted the English Translation of this Letter, that

that so it might be of more general Advantage: But, for the sake of the Learned, I have inserted in the Margin several of the Emphatical Passages in it from the *Original Latin*, which, I think, was never publish'd. N. B. If any Person has a Mind to see the *Original Latin Letter*, with the Names of the Ministers subscribing it in their own Hand-Writing, and will be so good as to repair to me for the Sight of it, I shall readily gratify them with it.

The Letter return'd by the Ministers of *New-England* to Mr. JOHN DURY concerning his Pacification.

To the worthy and eminent Mr. JOHN DURY.

Salutations,

THAT amongst so many horrid Alarms of War, amongst so many fatal Differences of Opinion raised in Matters of Religion, and that also after so many, and such unwearied Labours of famous Intercessors, now so often in this Cause undertaken in vain; you should O *Dury*, the most zealous Friend of Peace, not only be seriously thinking of, but are also, unto this Day strongly endeavouring the Espousals of Truth and Peace between the Professors of the Gospel; we verily do largely congratulate you in the conceiving so great a Design, with our utmost, and daily Prayers, helping forward (by God's Assistance) the Birth of this Man-child. Suffer us to speak the very Truth of the Matter, nor is there any need to deny the same: Even as the Holy Scripture relates how the Olive Branch, brought much Comfort to the Parent of the other World after the Flood, while he was lamenting over the Tremendous Spectacle of the Deluge overflowing all here below; in like Manner did your Letter, breathing a very Spirit of Peace, as another *Noah's Dove*, sent down from Heaven, wonderfully refresh the exile Brethren, who were almost astonished to see so many

many Nations, that profess the Gospel, making irreconcilable War amongst themselves, together with the many and great Dissentions in the Business of Religion, and that monstrous Flood of Error breaking forth, not out of the Cataracts of the Clouds, but the very Mouth of the Dragon.

Be it so, that we are in the utmost Parts of the Earth; we have only changed our Climate, not our Minds: We have altered our Place, that we might retain the Faith without alteration. There are indeed some, that might have been better employed, at least meer Strangers to our Affairs, who do therefore impute unto us the Guilt of Schism, because in the first Place we have endeavoured after the pure Worship of God. But if any see good to enquire into the Reason, why these Churches in the Wilderness left their Country, this it was, *viz.* That the Ancient Faith, and pure Worship, might be found inseparable Companions in our Practice, and that our Posterity might be undefiled in Religion: Nevertheless, we are never unmindful of the Saying of *Austin* to the Brethren in the Wilderness, as he styles them; *There are two Things considerable, saith he, Conscience and good Name: Conscience as necessary for thy self, good Name for thy Neighbour: He who trusts to his Conscience, and neglects his good Name, is cruel, especially if he be set in that Place, of which the Apostle writing to his Disciple, saith, In all Things shew thy self an Example of good Works.* It may not be unlawful for us, who are in the Wilderness on the further side of the Seas, as well as those, who through Grace are called to the Ministry, though in our selves the greatest of Sinners, and the least of all the Saints, as any others, to Apologize for our selves in the Words of the Tribes beyond Jordan a little changed, for the vindicating or preserving our good Name in a Matter of so great Moment, both before great ones, Fathers, Brethren, and every gentle Reader, *The Lord God of Gods, the Lord God of Gods he knows, and Israel shall know, if wittingly and willingly*

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ly in Rebellion, or treacherous dealing against the Lord, or in Schism it be, that we have departed from our Country, save us not this Day.

But yet notwithstanding, we are not unmindful of that so known Oracle, [*Love the Truth and Peace:*] We neither strive for Truth without making Reckoning of Peace, neither do we pursue Peace with the Loss of Truth: The former defaceth, this latter teareth the seamless Coat of the Church. It is as necessary to avoid the Rock of Schism on the Right Hand, as the Quicksands of Confusion on the Left. We renounce *Samaritanism*, that deadly sink of false Doctrine, as much as we fly from *Donatism*, the sore Enemy of Evangelical Temperament, and Devourer (if we may speak after *Tertullian*) of Christian Society; but admire and embrace the Concord, and Agreement of the Gospel. We are no whit pleased with *Cassanders* shaking Hands with Papists at the furthest Distance, erring from the Truth; nor yet with the Romanist renouncing Communion with them that are otherwise minded in lesser Differences: But in special Manner we ought to labour, that we may walk with an even Foot, and not to turn aside an Hair's breadth from the Truth: In the mean Time, it is better to be a *Cyprian* than a *Steven*. It is much more grievous to think aright, and be found a Schismatick, than to think amiss in Things not fundamental, and be of a peaceable Spirit. The Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is a Spirit of Truth, of Peace and Communion: So desirous of Peace, that it requireth Communion in a true Church, although not pure; and so desirous of Truth, that it forbids impurity in any Church whatsoever. That, that is the Mark at which we aim, and which we endeavour and breath after, in him who is *the Way, the Truth and Life*.

It is confessed, there are some *Apices*, or lesser Points in Divinity, which the Church of God hath now for above an hundred Years bewailed, as the obstacles of Peace, concerning which the chief Controversies maintained

tained are about Predestination, Ubiquity, and the Eucharist. About these Points how many thousand Polemick Writings have been extant all abroad, which the Christian World is scarce able to contain? Alas! that ever there should be a War about the Sacrament! Alas! that ever there should be any contentious Treatises about the Eucharist, turning the very Badge of Union into an Apple of Contention! Who can refrain from Tears at the uttering of such Things? Yet these notwithstanding, that there is Place for the so much desired Coalition between the Evangelicks and the Reformed, so called, may easily be made appear, by running thro' the chief Heads of Things:

As namely, Because in the first Article, they who were the greatest Favourers of that eminent Worthy of the former Age, do yet ascribe the Work of Conversion wholly unto God, and do likewise stily maintain, and accurately defend, Grace to be altogether free; who were also utter Enemies to that pestilent Opinion of the Schoolmen, [*That God is bound to him that doth what he can of himself.*] And who likewise do deservedly account it meer Pelagianism, to make any kind of Qualifying Fitness a Moral Motive unto predetermining Grace.

As for the Opinion of the Ubiquity of the Humane Nature, by Virtue of the Hypostatical Union; it cannot be denied, but that Papers have come abroad, written with too much Gall and sharpness. In the mean while it is agreed upon by all, and taken for granted, That the Humane Nature is Personally Omnipresent. According to this Rule likewise are other Propositions about the Person to be judged of, under this Head.

Lastly, As concerning the Lord's Supper; the Divines of either Part, do reject Transubstantiation, together with worshipping of Bread. But about the Real Presence, viz. Sacramental, of the Body and Blood of Christ, it is agreed between both. These so many and

great Differences, are to be accounted as so many Heart-griefs, altho' not to be numbred amongst them which by the Apostle are called *Unlearned Questions*; yet we judge them not to be of that Moment, as to hinder the giving each other the Right Hand of Fellowship, or the Pledges of Ecclesiastical Brotherhood (a), building upon that Apostolical Canon of holy Communion, *Nevertheless, in that whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Thing*, Phil. 3. 16. Here also we may call to Mind that common and received Distinction between Fundamentals and Non-Fundamentals; and, that Brotherly Fellowship is not to be refused with Men peaceable, and otherwise Orthodox, for the sake of Non-Fundamentals.

We account it very unequal to fasten upon any one that holds an Opinion all the Consecratories, which to him that argues according to the exactest Grounds of Reason, seem to follow upon such Premises, especially if those Consequences be disowned by him: In which respect there are no small Errors on both Sides, while those of our Side impeach the other of *Eutyches* his Opinion, tho' refusing to own it, for the sake of Consubstantiation; and they on the other Side go about to make ours guilty of making God the Author of Sin, altho' we never so much disclaim it, in the Point of Predestination. The Disputes about the Consequences of these, whether rightly inferred or not, from the Premises, belong not to this Place to be examined, yea the Matter itself requires rather that we should forbear.

But this Tragedy is not yet at an End. For, as to Polity, and indifferent Things, they have taken up divers Opinions; who it were to be wished that they would embrace that Concord one with another, which
hath

(a) *Tot & talia Dissidia tot facemur Cordelia;—Tanti autem esse, quo minus dexteras daretur jungere Dextris, & mutua audire & reddere Fraternitatis Ecclesiastica Symbola, minime judicamus.*

hath been so often endeavoured after. But the Differences of this Nature, as they are not so small, that the Lovers of Truth should be silent about them; so neither are they so great, that they need be any hindrance to the Seekers of Peace and Quietness in the present Undertaking; as may appear by the unquestioned Example of our Saviour, who refused not to celebrate the Worship of God in the Jewish Church, defaced at that Time with more grievous Corruptions. They who are united to Christ by Heart-converting Grace, are Members of his Mystical Body; and whosoever, but in appearance at least, are joyned to the Head, and have added themselves to the Polity of Israel, are to be received Members of the Political Body. Now Communion follows upon Union. Besides the Nature of Political, as well as Christian Society, doth utterly forbid to deny the Privileges of Fellowship to such Members as are found without Scandal.

Thus much we thought good to speak briefly about this Point, that Honoured Persons, and Respected Brethren, might understand what Reasons moved us to entertain the same Opinion with themselves. We have been taught, that *the Idea, or Pattern of holy Communion ought to be fetched from Divine Writ, and not to be framed after our own Pleasure* (b).

The Rules of Sacred Society are certain; beyond which, or short of which, it is not in our Power to extend, or withhold the Right Hand of Brotherhood. Whoever having attained these shall acknowledge them; and having acknowledged them, shall walk according unto them; so holding Communion with Sinners, as he doth not in the least communicate with their Sins, so as he is wanting neither to the Truth, nor to himself, nor his Brethren, him we deservedly esteem both as a Guide and Pillar of the Church: Whether we will
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(b) *Communiois Sanctæ Ideam a Divina Pagina petendam, non pro Arbitrio nostro cudendam didicimus.*

or no, we are Brethren; and seeing we are Brethren, let us acknowledge our selves what we are, namely, *Brethren in the Lord*. A Day would scarce suffice, to rehearse how many and how great incitements do call for, and require this. To account the weak in Faith for none, is indeed itself a greater Weakness. The Name of Brethren is sweet: It is Matter of great Delight to be such indeed. But it is much to be lamented, that those who are so, should not be acknowledged to be so. *So to stand for Truth, that by too tenacious insisting upon Doctrine, we make no reckoning of the Rights of Society, is to be carried with the Study of Parties, not of the Truth(c);* and to undertake the Patronage of an Opinion, rather because it is our own, than because it is true.

Sounder Philosophy determines, that the excellency of Union is to be esteemed according to the Dignity of the Cause. We here pass over in Silence the conspiring together of the Waters and dry Land to make one Globe; as also that of the Frame of the Heavenly and the Earthly Globe, to make one Sphere of the World. There may be found an heap of Miracles in the quiet gathering the living Creatures into the Ark, and there abiding in it, where the most savage of them laid aside their savageness; being ready to acknowledge *Noah* for their Lord (not much otherwise than *Adam* in giving Names unto them) where might be seen the Wolf standing amongst the Sheep, neither do the Flocks seem afraid of the great Lyons: These are indeed very great Things; but yet if they be compared with the Mystical Union, shining forth in one of the very least of Christ's Members, there would want Words to express how great the Distance is. To proceed therefore, if the Union of a very few Believers be of so great

(c) *Veritatem item Operam dare, ut Doctrina tenacius inhaerendo Societatis Fura susque deque faciamus, est Partes agere, non veritati studere.*

great Moment, of how great Account should be the Uniting of all Protestants in the Faith? But let us here pause a while, and not think much to weigh this Matter a little more seriously, and we shall find (unless we are much deceived) this very Union about which we are treating, if it be without Hypocrisy and Deceit, but as the very Off-spring and Image of the Hypostatical Union, and only next unto it on Earth (as to the Kind) and like unto which there will not be found any in Heaven, no not when Angelical Nature remained in its Perfection. We do believe indeed, and not out of a vain Conceit, That this Agreement is a bright Looking-Glass made of the Blood of the Lamb, wherein Jesus himself, the Prince of so great a Peace, clearly shines forth: In passing through which also, he doth irradiate the World with its brightness, while it steadfastly beholds this clear Looking-Glass, and by irradiating, ingenerates Faith therein. In which respect we need not fear to affirm, That the perpetual Conjunction of all Mankind, established by the Bond of the first Covenant, would be by infinite Degrees exceeded by it; *That they all may be one, as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that the World may know that thou hast sent me, Joh. 17. 21.*

If the possibility of such a Peace should appear, we could not do much in the pursuing the Necessity thereof. Notwithstanding (if we may have Leave) that this Necessity may be fastned in our Minds, as they say, with the strongest Nail, before we leave this exhortatory Part of our Discourse, we think meet, for a Conclusion, to adorn and strengthen it with the Sayings of some famous Men, tending much unto Peace.

At Marpurg, Luther long since professed, *That he would not yield this Praise to the Adverse Party, that they should be more studious of Concord and Peace than himself.* From whence arose that famous Concord of Marpurg. We find also Calvin thus expressing himself, that he might compose Minds, and allay so great Com-

Commotions, at a Time when Contention was grown much too hot; But I desire you to consider, first, How great a Man Luther is, and in what great Gifts he doth excel, and with how great Courage and Constancy of Mind, with how great Dexterity, with how great Efficacy of Learning, he hath hitherto endeavoured to put to Flight the Kingdom of Antichrist, and propagate the Doctrine of Salvation. I have been often wont to say, That if he should call me Devil a thousand Times, that I would yet give him that Honour, as to acknowledge him the eminent Servant of God. But our Davenant most severest of all; If the Schisms of Churches might be taken away, as without Deubt they may, I would rather have a Mill-Stone hanged about my Neck, and be cast into the Sea, than either binder a Work so acceptable unto God, and so necessary to avoid Scandals, or not promote it with my whole Heart, and all my utmost Endeavours.

Epiphanius would not that Christians should have any By-Name. Let the Nick-Name of Zuinglians and Calvinists then cease, the Marks rather of Faction, than of Brotherly Union. What should we have to do with Luther? What should we have to do with Calvin? We profess the Gospel, we believe the Gospel (d). Bellarmine somewhere hath a Catalogue of a great many Kingdoms that fell off from the Papacy: Whose Defection from the Mystery of Iniquity, if it hath troubled the Cardinals of Rome, how much more would their Unit-ing together in the Mystery of Piety, be a Terror to the Roman Party? When the truly holy League shall wholly stand for the Lamb; when Humane Endeavours and Dissensions being laid aside, they shall only intend that one Thing, to afford their mutual Help for the promoting of Religion; when they shall

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(d) *Noluit Epiphanius, ut Christiani gestarent Epitheton Nomen. Faceffant Zuinglianorum & Calvinianorum, Cognomen Factionis, potius quam fraternæ Unionis insignia. Quid nobis cum Lutheſo? Quid nobis cum Cálvino? Evangelici sumus: Credimus Evangelio.*

unanimously carry on the War of the Lord against the Whore, as if they were indued with the very Spirit of the *Revelation*; when they shall be called neither *English*, nor *Dutch*, nor *Swedes*, nor *Danes*, but only *Christians*.

*If Poets Writings any Truth contain,
Ages fierce Wars shall never more maintain.*

But it is not in our Power, most excellent *Dury*, to add our Counsel, either to the beginning or the preserving this Agreement. You are not ignorant, that we are *Exiles*, *Britains*, altogether divided from the rest of *Europe*; wherefore we are less fit to perform this Task: Neither are we so unsensible of our own Weakness, as not readily to confess our inability for so great a Service; nor is there need, seeing we must thankfully acknowledge and own, that this Office hath been abundantly performed; both by Strangers, as well as by our own Countrymen.

We may here call to Mind, and not without some sacred Sympathy, those Blessed Souls, *Melancthon* and *Pareus*, now amongst the Blessed; the one no less famous amongst the Reformed, than the other amongst the Evangelicks; The first of whom going towards *Haganoa*, with sighing utter'd these Words,

*In Synods hitherto we lived have,
And now in them return unto the Grave (e).*

The other seriously meditating on the Controversy of the Eucharist, brake forth into these Words; *I am weary with disputing*. Thus, if these Men might be Judges, we ought rather to Pray than Dispute, and study how to Live than to Contend. And perhaps the Divines of either Part, after they have been wearied, and broken in their Spirits with daily and continual Contentions, will more readily accept of the Counsels of Peace, which hitherto have been less acceptable, while the Sense of Anger remained fresh: After by

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(e) *Viximus in Synodis, & jam moriemur in illis.*

long Use they have been taught, they may prefer the Waters of the *Pacifick Sea* before those of *Meribah*. Nor need we say, That those Honoured Persons, and Brethren, will more kindly entertain the Counsels of Peace, seeing there are, we know not how many Sayings, Writings, Deeds of Princes, Churches and Universities, openly testifying, That eminent Men of both Orders, and that not of the lowest Rank, have not only received, but taken Counsel together, and engaged their helping Hand, as Need shall require: From which Beginnings it is but meet to hope the best. God is able to make them Workers of Peace, whom he hath given to be Seekers of Peace: If otherwise, such eminent Endeavours shall not want their Reward in Heaven, and their Honour in Israel. These are piously Heroick Enterprises, which as they do oblige all good Men, so are they to be admired of them. Their Praises, how great, or how little soever, as the present Age is not altogether silent about them; so will Posterity declare the rest, and perhaps *the unknown Parts of the World*.

We give Thanks unto the Father of Lights with all our Hearts, who hath put this Work into the Mind of *Dury*, favouring of a Spirit more than Humane; and hath added also suitable Courage to the promoting so Pious and Apostolical a Matter: Which Task, whosoever shall effect, if we may be Judges, will deserve a more than ordinary Triumphant Statue; and whose Monument will so far excel the Trophies of *Achilles*, as if they were not worthy to be mentioned in the same Day. However the Issue of the Matter fall, yet it is a great deal, to have attempted in a great Design. *Seek the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.*

We give Thanks unto the God of Peace, who would not suffer the Labours of his Servant endeavouring after Peace, to be undertaken altogether without Success. Therefore, most worthy Sir, go on in this your Strength, resting on the Prophecy for the desired Concord, *That*

it shall be in its own appointed Time. The Powers which have obeyed the Roman Harlot, shall hate her, make her naked, and burn her with Fire; for God hath put it into the Hearts of the Kings, that they should fulfil his Will. It doth not become those that have a meet Understanding of Things, to doubt of their Agreement in the Faith, who are to burn to Ashes the Metropolis of the last Head of the Beast, as an Enemy to the Faith. The Discord of the Kings detains the Whore on her Throne, and keeps the Woman in the Wilderness, while they are contending amongst themselves.

It makes all Priamus his House rejoyce,

And other Trojans to lift up their Voice.

But this their sacred Concord, the renowned Sons of Sion cannot but look upon, as a forerunner of the Destruction of *Rome*, now at the very Doors; and accordingly with their daily and most ardent Prayers breathe after, hope, and long for the same.

Lastly, We give Thanks to Mr. *Dury*, into whose Heart it came to remember *Joseph*, separate from his Brethren at so great a Distance, both by Sea and Land; and who hath vouchsafed with so comfortable a Message to visit us poor Wretches, clothed in Sackcloth for our Warfare; yet. as we trust, the Sackcloth of the Gospel: who hath not refused to put *New-England*, as a part of the Skirt of *Aaron's Garment*, upon which hath descended some of the precious Oyl, into the Catalogue of the so much famed Agreement: And who hath by his Letter exhorting unto such an Agreement, given us an Occasion to bring in this Testimony, such as it is, for our brotherly Communion with the whole Company of Protestants professing the Faith of Christ Jesus. For we must ingenuously confess, that then, when all Things were quiet, and no threatening Signs of War appeared, seeing we could not be permitted by the Bishops at that Time prevailing, to perform the Office of the Ministry in Publick, nor yet to enjoy the holy Ordinances without Subscription, and Conformity, (as they were wont to speak)

nor without the mixture of Humane Inventions with Divine Institutions, we chose rather to depart into the remote and unknown Coasts of the Earth; for the sake of a purer Worship, than to lye down under the Hierarchy in the abundance of all Things, but with the prejudice of Conscience. But that in flying from our Country, we should renounce Communion with such Churches as profess the Gospel, is a Thing which we confidently and solemnly deny.

Certainly, so far as concerns our selves, in whatever Assemblies amongst us the whole Company of them that profess the Gospel, the Fundamentals of Doctrine, and Essentials of Order are maintained, altho' in many niceties of controversial Divinity they are at less Agreement with us, we do hereby make it manifest (which yet we would always have understood, so as the least part of Truth, according to the Nature of that Reverence which ought exactly to be yielded thereunto, may be preserved) that we do acknowledge them all, and every one for Brethren; and that we shall be ready to give unto them the Right Hands of Fellowship in the Lord, if in other Things they be peaceable, and walk orderly (f).

We humbly beseech the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Lips is only Power to perswade, that he would enlighten Princes, Divines, and even all who are rightly called Christians from the Name of Christ, with the lively Splendor of such an Agreement, and draw them with a Soul-moving Energy to the divine Love of himself. As for that which concerns your self, the sweetest Follower of Peace, We should
account

(f) Certe ad nos quod attinet (quod tamen vel Ungula veritatis pro Ratione Religionis illi ad Amussim adhibenda semper salva dictum volumus) quoscunque apud Cetus per universum Evangelicorum Chorum Fundamentalibus Doctrinae & Essentialibus Ordinis vigent, quomodo in plerisque Controversiis Theologiae Apicibus nobiscum juxta minus Sentiant; Illos tamen ad unum omnes pro Fratribus agnoscimus: Iisque cetera Pacificis & ordinate incedentibus Dextram Communionis in Domino porrigere paratissimos nos esse hisce palam fecimus.

account it an heinous Crime to be wanting unto you in our Prayers to the very God of Peace, That he would so preserve your Life, your Course, and your Work, that you may bring unto a Conclusion your so eminent Undertaking, with so many Sighs, Labours, Sweatings, Dangers, and with so great Charges hitherto carried on: If otherwise, and that it seem good to the great Determiner of Things, before this come to pass to advance him that hath been a follower of Peace on Earth, to the State of a Blessed Saint in Heaven; that then he would raise up other *Durys*, who may bring the Work so happily begun to its desired End.

Your most observant Brethren in Christ, The Ministers of the Churches, and Preachers of the Word, Militant for the Faith of Jesus in *New-England*:

John Wilson Pastor of *Boston*.

John Norton Teacher of the same.

John Mayo Pastor of *New-Boston*.

Richard Mather Teacher of *Dorchester*.

John Allin Pastor of *Deatham*.

John Eliot Teacher of *Roxbury*.

Samuel Danforth Pastor of the same.

William Thomson Pastor of *Braintry*.

Henry Flint Teacher of the same.

Thomas Thatcher Teacher of *Weymouth*.

Peter Hubbard Pastor of *Hingham*.

John Miller Pastor of *Yarmouth*.

John Wilson junior Pastor of *Medfield*.

Zeebariah Symmes Pastor of *Charlestown*.

Thomas Shepard Teacher of the same.

Samuel Stone Teacher of *Hartford*.

Jonathan Mitchel Pastor of *Cambridge*.

John Sherman Pastor of *Watertown*.

Edmund Brown Pastor of *Sudbury*.

Edward Bulkly Pastor of *Concord*.

Thomas Carter Pastor of *Woborne*.

Samuel Haugh Pastor of *Reding*.

John Fiske Pastor of *Chelmsford*.

John Reyner Teacher of *Dover*.

Ezekiel Rogers Teacher of *Rowly*.

Samuel Philips Teacher of the same.

Samuel Whiting Pastor of *Lyn*.

John

John Higginson Pastor of *Salem*.
Thomas Cobber Pastor of *Ipswich*.
William Hubbard Teacher of the same.
Francis Dane Teacher of *Andover*.
William Worcester Pastor of *Salisbury*.
John Ward Pastor of *Haverhil*.
Timothy Dalton Teacher of *Hampton*.
Seaborn Cotton of the same.
Joseph Emerson Pastor of *York*.
Michael Wigglesworth Pastor of *Maldon*.
William Walton Minister of the Word.
Ralph Smith Minister of the Word.
Charles Chauncy, President of *Harvard College*.
Gershom Bulkly
Thomas Graves
Zech. Symmes
Zech. Briden

} Fellows of the said College.

Numb. IV.

I Might fitly subjoin to the Letter foregoing another Letter of the famous Mr. JOHN DAVENPORT Batchelor of Divinity, who was Minister of *New Haven* and afterwards Pastor of the first Church in *Boston New-England*, to the pious DURY upon the same Occasion that the foregoing Letter was written; which Letter was signed by the Ministers of *Connecticut Colony*. This Letter breathes the very same good and catholic Spirit with the foregoing one. But, lest the Appendix should swell too much upon us, I consent to the dropping it. *N. B.* As I signified concerning the former Letter; so I would advertize concerning this, that if any Gentlemen or others desire to see the *Original Copy* of it, I have it at their Service.

Numb. V.

AND, as a farther Demonstration of the Catholic and Generous Principles of the first Founders of these

these Churches, I would ask Leave of the Reader to refer him to the *New-England Chronology* of the learned and accurate Mr. PRINCE of Boston, in Pages the *Eighty eighth, Eighty ninth, Ninetieth, Ninety first, Ninety second* and *Ninety third* of which Chronology he will find abundant Satisfaction upon this Head.

Part the second, containing *the Proofs and Evidences of a Consociation of Churches among these Churches for their mutual Light and Assistance.* I

IN the *twenty first* Page of *The Discourse concerning Congregational Churches* I have affirmed, that these Churches acknowledge a Consociation of Churches for imparting mutual Light and Assistance: And in the *Eighth* Chapter of this Book I have maintain'd the same Thing. Now, for the more full Proof and Confirmation of this Point, I shall here reprint from my honoured Grandfather's Book, entitled, *The Order of the Churches in New-England vindicated*, his Answer to this Question, *Is it expedient that Churches should enter into a Consociation, or Agreement, that Matters of more than ordinary Importance, such as the Gathering of a New Church, the Ordination, Deposition, or Translation of a Pastor be done with common Consent?*

Ans^r. This is both Expedient and Necessary. The Synod which Convened at Boston Anno 1662. has sufficiently cleared this Point. And although there was in that

that Synod some dissent as to the *Question* about the *Subject of Baptism* then discuss'd; in the Answer to the other *Question* relating to the *Consociation of Churches*, there was an unanimous Concurrence. The Design of which is not (as has been well observed by Dr. (a) Ames and Mr. (b) Parker) to infringe the Liberty of particular Churches, but from the Word of God to direct and strengthen them in the regular Exercise thereof. The Reasons for it are such as these.

1. The Churches of Christ stand in a Sisterly Relation each to other under Christ their Head, having the same Faith, and ought to have the same Order. *Eph. 4. 5. Col. 2. 5. Phil. 3. 16.* This Union implies a suitable Communion, and that they ought to have a mutual Care each of other, *Cant. 8. 8.*

2. The Scripture teacheth that in weighty Cases we should ask Counsel. *2 Sam. 20. 18. Prov. 3. 5. and 15. 22. and 24. 6.* Which General Rules concern *Politics* as well as particular Persons, and Churches as well as civil Societies.

3. There are Scripture Examples to instruct us in our Duty herein. We find, that when the Church in *Antioch* had a weighty Case before them, they sent to another Church for Counsel, *Act. 15. 2.* The Apostle Paul sought for the Concurrence, and Right Hand of Fellowship of other Apostles, *Gal. 2. 9.* Ordinary Elders and Churches have no less need of each other to prevent their running in vain. *Gal. 2. 2.*

4. Such a Communion of Churches as that which we plead for, is no *Innovation*, but that which has ever been the Profession and Practice of those that have been called *Congregational*. There is a Book which bears the Title of, *An Answer of the Elders of the several Churches in New-England to Thirty two Questions*, Printed in the Year 1643. Of which Book my Father
Matber

(a) *Medul. Theol. L. 1. C. 39. Thes. 27.*

(b) *De pol. eccles. L. 3. C. 22.*

Matther was the sole Author. And he wrote it in the Primitive Times of these Churches, (*viz.* in the Year 1639.) as himself assured me. What he wrote was approved of by other Elders, especially by Mr. Cotton, unto whom he communicated it. Now in Answer to Q. 18, p. 64. are these Words, *The Consociation of Churches into Classes and Synods, we hold to be lawful, and in some Cases necessary: As namely, in Things that are not peculiar to one Church, but common to them all. And likewise, when a Church is not able to end any Matter which concerns only themselves, then they are to seek for Counsel and Advice from Neighbour Churches, as the Church at Antioch did send unto the Church at Jerusalem, Act. 15. 2. The Ground and Use of Classes and Synods with the Limitations therein to be observed, is summarily laid down by Dr. Ames, unto whom we do wholly consent in this Matter. This was, and is the Judgment of all that adhere to the Order of the Gospel professed in the Churches of New-England. The World is much mistaken in thinking that Congregational Churches are Independent. The Name has indeed been fastned upon them by their Adversaries; but our Platform of Discipline Chap. 2. Sect. 5. disclaims the Name. And so does our renowned Hooker (c) in his Survey of Church Discipline. Likewise those famous Apologists in the Assembly at Westminster, viz. Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Burroughs, and Mr. Bridge, say, that It is a Maxim to be abhorred, that a single and particular Society of Men professing the Name of Christ, should arrogate to themselves an Exemption from giving an Account to, or being censurable by Neighbour Churches about them. That Apostle of his Age, (as Dr. Goodwin calls him) Mr. Cotton, the first and forever famous Teacher in this Boston, when he in the Name of the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, gave to Mr. Mitchel the Right Hand of Fellowship, at his Ordina-*

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nion to the Pastoral Office in the Church of Cambridge, he did in a singular Manner recommend to him (and that excellent Man was to his dying Day mindful of Mr. Cotton's Advice) Endeavours for the establishment of a *Consociation* amongst the Churches of Christ throughout this Colony, that wise Man foreseeing that without this, Disorder and Confusion would in Process of Time inevitably happen; as I have more largely declared in (d) another Discourse in which Mr. Cotton's Proposals respecting the *Consociation* mentioned, are publish'd to the World. Moreover, that the concurring Judgment of those who are *Congregational* is according hereunto is evident from the *Declaration of Faith and Order* which was agreed unto by the Messengers of One hundred and Twenty *Congregational Churches* in England, who met at the Savoy in London, Anno 1658. They thus declare, (e) *In case of Difficulties and Differences in Point of Doctrine, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned in their Peace, Union and Edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any Proceeding in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order: It is according to the Mind of Christ, that many Churches holding Communion together, do by their Messengers meet in a Synod or Council to consider and give their Advice in, or about the Matter in Difference.* But the Testimony of that Blessed *Jeremiah Burroughs* puts the Thing beyond all Dispute. For his Words are these, (f) *Those in the Congregational Way acknowledge,*

1. *That they are bound in Conscience to give Account of their Ways to Churches about them, or to any other who shall require it. This not in an Arbitrary way, but as a Duty which they owe to God and Man.*

2. *They acknowledge that Synods of other Ministers and Elders about them are an Ordinance of Jesus Christ for the helping the Church against Errors, Schisms and Scandals.*

3. *That*

(d) *In my first Principles of N. E. p. 28. &c.*

(f) *In his Irenicum. p. 43, 44, —47.*

3. That these Synods may from the Power they have from Christ, admonish Men and Churches in his Name, when they see Evils continuing in, or growing upon the Church, and their Admonitions carry with them the Authority of Jesus Christ.

4. As there shall be Cause, they may declare Men or Churches to be subverters of the Faith, or otherwise according to the Nature of their Offence, to shame them before all the Churches about them.

5. They may by a solemn Act in the Name of Jesus Christ, refuse any further Communion with them till they repent.

6. They may declare also in the Name of Christ, that those erring People or Churches are not to be received into Fellowship with any of the Churches of Christ, nor to have Communion with any other in the Ordinances of Christ.

If it shall be said, surely they do not come up to these six Things mentioned. To that I answer, (says Mr. Burroughs) I do not in these deliver only my own Judgment, but by what I know of the Judgment of all those Brethren with whom I have Occasion to converse by Conference both before and since, I stand charged to make it good to be their Judgment also; yea, it has been theirs and mine for divers Years, even then when we never thought to have enjoyed our own Land again. We see by these Testimonies that Congregational Men in general, as well as the Churches of New-England in special, are no such Independents, no such Brownists, no such Morellians, as some have represented them to be.

5. If we admit not a Consociation of Churches, there will be no Remedy against the Male Administrations of particular Churches; nor any Cure of Schisms, or Errors that may happen in our Churches. This has been objected (but injuriously) as a Scandal attending the Congregational Church Discipline, and that therefore it is a Way not practicable. Indeed if we refuse this part of Church Communion, the Objection would be

unanswerable. And who would be willing to be a Member of that Church, in which altho' he should be never so much wrong'd, there would be no Relief for him upon Earth? There was once a Church in *New-England*, which having censured one of their Members, he complain'd of the supposed Wrong done him, to Neighbour Elders, who thought he had receiv'd hard Measure. The Pastor and major part of the Church were not willing the Case should have a re-hearing before the Elders and Messengers of other Churches. Upon this, great Clamours were rais'd, and Prejudices taken up against the Congregational Discipline. Mr. Cawdrey got this Story by the End, and in his *Epistle to the Dissenting Brethren*, p. 10. He says that a Minister in *N. E.* writes over to *England*, that this injured Person would have no remedy until the Churches in *New-England* were become Presbyterians, and that if Independency does not break all the Churches in *New-England* excepting a few Semi-Presbyterians, some are deceived. Who the Minister was that wrote thus to *England*, Mr. Cawdrey tell us not. But it is a great Wrong to the Churches of *New-England*, and to the way Congregational, to represent them, and all that are of that way, as being of such Independent and Unaccountable Principles, which they utterly disclaim. Dr. Owen in his *Disciplinary Catechism*, and especially in the *Additament thereunto*, (which was written on Occasion of a harsh and rash Censure in the *Independent Church in Cambridge in England*) has with great Evidence of Reason, refuted the maintainers of such an *Independency*.

6. The Order asserted is (as has been truly observed by the Learned *Doctor* last mention'd) confirm'd by the Practice of the first Churches after the Apostles: For when the Church in *Corinth* had by an undue Exercise of Discipline deposed some of their Elders, the Church of *Rome* taking Cognizance of it, wrote to them, reproving their rashness, and advis'd their Restoration,

as it is to be seen in the Epistle of *Clement* then Pastor of the Church in *Rome*, which *Clement* is thought to be the same whom *Paul* speaks of, *Phil.* 4. 3. And when the Church of *Antioch* was afterwards troubled with the Heresies of their Pastor *Samosetanus*, the Neighbouring Pastors came unto the Church, and join'd their Concurrence in his Deposition. It is certain that in the next Ages to the Apostles, a Pastor was not settled in any Church without the Concurrence of others. When the Church had Elected a Pastor, they presented him to the Neighbour Pastors for their Approbation, nor could he be legally confirm'd without it. (g) *Eusebius* tells us that when *Alexander* was chosen Pastor of the Church in *Jerusalem* by the Brethren of that Place, he had the common Consent of the Circumjacent Pastors. And thus (as *Cyprian* informs us) it was practised in all the Churches throughout *Africa*. He speaks particularly concerning *Sabinus*, who was Elected a Pastor of *Eremita* in *Spain*, that Neighbour Ministers concurred in his Ordination, after the Fraternity had Elected him. His Words are, (b) *Quod factum videmus in sabini Ordinatione ut de universæ Fraternitatis suffragio, & de Episcoporum judicio, Episcopatus ei deferetur.* We find in *Ecclesiastical Story*, that in the Primitive Times the Names of Persons to be ordained were publish'd abroad that so if any one had ought to object they might produce it. Which Custom of the Christians in the Election of their Pastors was so highly approv'd of by the Emperor *Severus*, as that he would have it put in Practice in establishing Governours of Provinces throughout the Empire.

7. Neither do the Reformed Churches ordain a Minister without the concurrence and approbation of Neighbour Ministers. To give the Right Hand of Fellowship to a new ordain'd Minister, was a usual Custom amongst

(g) *Lib.* 5. C. 11.

(b) *Cyprian. Epist.* 68.

amongst the Churches in *Bobemia*, for which they alledg'd this Scripture, *Gal. 2. 9.* as is testify'd by (i) *Comenius*. In the beginning of the *Reformation* in the Church of *Scotland*, one Article of their Discipline, is, That *when a Minister is ordain'd the rest of the Ministers shall take the Elected by the Hand in sign of their Consent*, as is related in the *History of the Reformation* (b), which goeth under the Name of *Mr. Knox*. I find also, that there is the like Practice in the Protestant *French Churches*, &c.



Part the third; containing a Vindication of the *New-English Churches* in sundry Instances, taken from *A Letter of Advice to the Churches of the Non-Conformists in the English Nation, endeavouring their Satisfaction in that Point, who are the true Church of England*; which Letter was written by *Dr. MATHER* my honoured Father and publish'd at *London* in the Year 1700. *N. B.* The infamous *Wesley*, in his printed *Abuses of Mr. MORTON's Academy*, where the *Alms of the Dissenters*, especially of the

(i) *Ratio. Disciplin.* p. 33.

the renowned Dr. OWEN, had given him his Education, laments the *Danger of the Church of England from Three*, whom he makes considerable Adversaries, whereof the Writer of this Letter of Advice is one: But he concludes with comforting himself, that the Intercession of K. CHARLES the Martyr in the Heavens for it will preserve it.

THE Author of this Letter having shewn, that the Dissenters in *England* are *more strict Adherers to the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England than some who make the greatest Noise in behalf of that Church*, then proceeds as follows.

—But the *Non-conformists* cannot be sincere Members of the *Church of England*, because they do not acknowledge the *Divine Right* of the Modern DIOCESAN EPISCOPACY. No! I pray, why not? Let us a little enquire into the Judgment of the *Old* and the *True Church of England* upon this Matter, and it will presently appear, that you are far more of the *Church of England*, than those *Fanatics* (of late so much increased) that not only advance the *Jus Divinum* of their *Diocesan Episcopacy*, but also question the validity of the *Sacraments* administered by any that have not received their *Ordination* from it. Albeit the present *Form of making and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, asserts, That *Bishops and Priests* are *distinct Orders*, and they must be published as *Excommunicate*, who affirm, That this Book does contain any thing in it repugnant to the Word of God: Yet, my Brethren, from the Beginning it was

was not so. Behold, *The Church of England* it self stands *Excommunicate* by its own *Canons*, as much as you. It is notorious, that the *Diocesan Episcopacy* and the *National Church-Government* by *Bishops*, was never own'd to be *Jure Divino* until K. *James I.* came to be King of *England*. It was he, who upon the Enchantments of *Bancroft*, first yielded unto that, which his Predecessors would never have endured. (d) Even in King *Elfrick's* Days, (e) the *Church of England* plainly denied *Bishops* and *Priests* to be distinct *Orders*. But I will not carry you back to such early Days. In the Days of King *Henry the Eighth*, *Tindal* (f) expressly maintain'd, ' That the Apostles following the Rule of ' Christ, ordained in his Kingdom and Congregation ' Two Officers; one called *Bishop*, which same was call'd *Priest* and *Elder*; and another called *Deacon*. All ' that were called *Elders* or *Priests* (he says) were called ' *Bishops* also. Thus wrote the *Martyr* who was own'd by his Enemies themselves, *Homo doctus, pius, & bonus*.

Lambert expressly maintain'd, (g) ' That in the *Primitive Church* there were no more Officers than *Bishops* ' and *Deacons*; and *Hierom* saith, Those we call *Priests* ' are all one, and no other but *Bishops*, and the *Bishops* ' none other but *Priests*. One of the *Articles* against ' *Barnes*, was (h) his holding, That they who in one ' Place are called *Episcopi*, or *Bishops*, you shall find in ' many that they be called *Presbyteri*, or *Elders*; and ' that according to *Athanasius*, every City should have ' its proper *Pastor*; and according to *Chrysostom*, the ' Teachers were not to be distracted with the governing ' many Churches, but have the Care and Charge of one ' Church only. And this Persuasion wherein you thus follow your Fathers, the Blessed *Martyrs* of the Church

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(d) See this proved in Mr. *Lob's True Dissenter*, Chap. 1.

(e) *Spelman*, p. 576. l. 17.

(f) In his *Practice of Popish Prelates*,

(g) In *As and Mon*, Vol. 2.

(h) *Ibid*,

of England, at last prevail'd so far, that *Cranmer* himself, with others, embraced it. Yea, 'twas not long before this became a Point establish'd by Authority; and, in *The necessary Erudition of a Christian Man*, a Book then publish'd by Authority, as the Doctrine of the Church of England, it is expressly affirm'd, That of these two Orders only [Priests and Deacons] Scripture makes express mention. The (i) Declaration about the Institution of Bishops and Priests, then also subscrib'd by the brave Lord Cromwel and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and other Bishops and Civilians, denied any Superiority of a Bishop above a Priest, to be found in the New Testament, and allow'd unto a Priest the Power of Ordination, and of Excommunication. In the very first Year of Edward the Sixth's Reign, there was an Act of Parliament, which (k) as Heylin complains, forced the Episcopal Order from their strong hold of Divine Institution, and make them no other than the King's Ministers only. Dr. Poinet, the Bishop of Winchester, then writing against Gardiner, shews, That the Reformers in those Days, were willing even to lay aside the Name of Bishop, and say Elder instead of it. And the incomparable Cranmer in his Resolutions to the King's Questions, approv'd by other Bishops, has these express Words, (l) *The Bishops and Priests were not two distinct Things, but both one Office in the beginning of Christ's Religion*; and he farther makes it manifest, that the great Reformers own'd not Episcopacy as a distinct Order from Presbytery to be of Divine Right, but only as a prudent Constitution of the Magistrates for the better governing of the Church. Beacon also, a famous Protestant Refugee in Q. Mary's Time, in his Catechism, dedicated to both Archbishops, puts the Question, *What*

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(i) See the Addenda to Dr. Burnet's History of Reformation, p 324.

(k) History of Edward VI, p. 51.

(l) Resol. to Q. 10.

difference is there between a Bishop and a Presbyter? And answers, *None at all; their Office is the same, their Authority and Power is one.* Upon the revival of the Reformation, at Q. Elizabeth's coming to the Crown, the most acknowledg'd and celebrated Writers of the Church of England, still made the very same Concession. Dr. Alley, the Bishop of Exeter, in his *Miscellanea*, (m) proves, both from the *Acts of the Apostles*, and from the *Epistle to the Philippians*, That the Scriptures make no difference between *Bishops* and *Elders*; and he says, That before *Factions*, by the instinct of the Devil, began in Religion, the Churches were govern'd by the *Common Council of the Priests, or Elders*. Dr. Pilkinton, Bishop of Duresme, in his *Confutation of the Addition*, affirms, That the Priviledges and Superiorities which *Bishops* have above other *Ministers*, be rather granted by *Man for maintaining of Quietness in the Commonwealth*, than commanded by God in his Word. The rare Dr. Whitaker, (n) making his Remarks on *Jerom's Confession*, That the *Difference* between *Presbyters* and *Bishops*, was brought in by *Men* long after the *Apostles*, as a Remedy against *Schism*; assures us, That it is a *Remedy worse than the Malady*. And Bishop Morton (o) tells the Papists, That the Power of Order and of *Jurisdiction* which they ascribe to *Bishops*, doth *De Jure Divino*, belong to all other *Presbyters*. But, that I may supersede a vast Number of other Quotations to this Purpose, let it suffice, That the excellent Bishop Jewel delivers this not as his private Opinion, but as the sense of the Church of England: (p) 'In Saint Jerom's time, ' (saith he) there were *Metropolitans, Arch-Bishops*, and ' *Arch-Deacons*, and others; but Christ appointed not ' these *Distinctions of Orders* from the Beginning. This ' is

(m) *Alley's Poor Man's Library*, Tom. 1. p. 95, 96.

(n) *De Eccles. Regim.* cont. 4. q. 1. §. 29. p. 540. col. 2.

(o) *Apol. Cathol.* l. 1. c. 21. p. 55.

(p) *Apol.* Part 2. ch. 3. Div. 5.

'is the Thing which we defend. St. *Jerom* saith, *Let Bishops understand, that they are in Authority over Priests, more by Custom than by Order of God's Truth.* *Erasmus* speaking of the Times of *Jerom*, saith, *Id temporis idem erat Episcopus, Sacerdos & Presbyter*; these three Names, *Bishops, Priest, and Presbyter* at that Time were all one; and unto this Testimony of *Jerom*, the *Bishop* adds that of St. *Austin*, That the Office of a *Bishop* is above the Office of a *Priest*, not by Authority of the *Scripture*, but after the Names of Honour, which the Custom of the Church hath now obtain'd. Yea, Archbishop *Whitgift* himself, speaking of the Government of the Church of England by *Bishops*, in his Time, (q) says, 'It is well known, that the Manner and Form of Government used in the Apostles Time, and express'd in the *Scripture*, is not now observ'd; but hath of Necessity been alter'd; and that any one kind of external Government perpetually to be observ'd, is no where in the *Scripture* prescrib'd unto the Church, but the Charge thereof is left unto the Magistrate. Neither do I know (saith he) any Learned Man of a contrary Judgment.

You see, Sirs, that *Cranmer* and *Jewel*, and the Chief of the Reformers, are as good as *Excommunicated* by the New Church of England; but you will, I know, readily receive them into your Communion, and may now in this Point value your selves, as being of the same Church of England with them. Indeed very few of the *Bishops* themselves asserted any other than what you assert about this Matter, until all Things were to be put into the Hands of a Party, that in pursuance of certain secret Articles, were to effect an Accommodation with Rome; and then by the *Jus Divinum* of Prelacy, the Power of Opposition must be taken out of the Hands of the Inferiour Clergy, who generally abhorred that vile Design. But it hath ever since been growing upon the

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the Nation? (*) Tho' I am informed the present Learned Bishop of *Salisbury* hath learnedly and courageously appear'd on your Side against it. (†) We will then pass to another *Article*, viz. That of your **DISCIPLINE**, which is too severe a Thing to be allow'd by some that would be offended, if you should not allow *them* to be the only *Church of England*. It will doubtless be as great a *Satisfaction* as *Vindication*, for you to find the *True Church of England* approving and applauding that very *Discipline* which is in your Churches practis'd: Now we all know what the *Liturgy* of the *Church of England* requires of all its *Communicants*:
 * Examine your Lives and Conversations by the Rule
 * of God's Commandment, [These are the express
 * Words in the *Order for the Administration of the Lord's
 * Supper*:] * And whereinfoever ye shall perceive your
 * selves to have offended, either by Will, Word, or
 * Deed, bewail your own Sinfulness, and confess your
 * selves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amend-
 * ment of Life. And if ye shall perceive your Offen-
 * ces to be such as are not only against God, but also
 * against your Neighbours, then ye shall reconcile your
 * selves unto them. If any of you be a Blasphemer of
 * God, an Hinderer, or Slanderer of his Word, an
 * Adulterer, or be in Malice, or Envy, or any other
 * grievous Crime, repent you of your Sins, or else
 * come not unto that Holy Table, lest after the taking
 * of that Holy Sacrament, the Devil enter into you as
 * he entred into Judas, and bring you to Destruction both
 * of Body and Soul.

Now, my Brethren, all the *strictness* used in your Churches about the *Terms* and *Ways* of admission to the *Lord's Table* with you, is nothing more nor less but a *Trial* of your *Communicants*, whether they have those *Qualifications* which the *Liturgy* of the *Church of England*

(*) See Def. of Mr. Henry of Schism, p. 35.

(†) Vind. of the Church of Scotland, p. 306.

gland hath prescrib'd. Indeed, in some of your Churches the Candidates of the Communion have not their Admission, without certain Publick Circumstances of expressing their Consent unto the Covenant of Grace. But this is no more than what I find the more pious Divines in the Church of England wishing and writing for. And one of them not Seven Years ago, hath publish'd his Mind in these Terms: (r) 'Would it not very much conduce to the Honour of God, and the Edification of the People, in their most holy Faith, if every Person baptized into the Christian Faith, should be oblig'd, when he comes to Years of Discretion, to appear in the Publick Congregation, there to make a Confession of his Faith, to recognize his Primitive Engagement, to avow that in his own Person which was done for him by Proxy; and that the Minister of the Congregation should recommend the Person to the Grace of God. I durst say, that the strict Churches of New-England it self, which wisely chuse to be as *explicite* as may be, in managing their Church-matters, do not ask for any thing more than what this Learned Son of the Church of England has thus propounded. And whereas you are for maintaining a Godly Discipline in your Churches towards those who scandalously break the Laws of our Lord Jesus Christ, is *this* any more than the very Common-Prayer-Book of the Church of England has encourag'd? You know that the first Words of the Commination against Sinners in that Book are these: 'Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a Godly Discipline, that such Persons as stood convicted of notorious Sin, were put unto open Penance;---- instead whereof, until the said Discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished, it is thought good that at this Time should be read the General Sentences of God's Cursing against impenitent Sinners. Now, I hope, you will not be denied your

(r) Snoden's Plea for Abatement, p. 41.

your being a part of the *Church of England*, meerly because you have actually *Restored* that which the *Church of England* advises us, *It were much to be wished* that it might be *restored*. I believe the Churches of *New-England* it self, in their *Platform of Church Discipline*, hath not a more severe Passage than that in the *Homilies of the Church of England*: (s) 'According to the Example of our Saviour Christ, and the Primitive Church, which was most holy and godly, and in the which *due Discipline* with severity was against the wicked, open Offenders were not admitted unto the use of the *Holy Sacrament* with other true Christians, until they had done open Penance before the whole Church: And this was practised not only upon mean Persons, but also upon the Rich, Noble, and Mighty. Behold, Sirs, your *Discipline* is by the *Church of England* it self, called, *A due Discipline*. The *Church of England* having thus allow'd your *Discipline*, I hope now a few CEREMONIES, which by its own Confession were never *Instituted* by the Lord Jesus Christ, will never be counted so *Essential* to it, that for the want thereof you must be cast out of Doors. Believe it, Sirs, an *House* built meerly upon *Ceremonies*, or Parts and Means of *Worship*, not *Instituted* in the *Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, will doubtless one Day suffer a *Storm* wherein it will *Fall*, and great will be the *Fall of it*. But that for your aversion to the *Uninstituted Ceremonies*, you may have as clear a Direction from the *Church of England* as may be, I desire to be inform'd, Whether the *Confession of Faith* in an hundred Articles on the *Creed*, composed by Dr. Hooper, the excellent Bishop of *Glocester*, were not then agreeable to the sense of the *Church*? Now in the *Eighty-fifth* of these Articles there is this remarkable Passage: 'They are not only *Idolaters* which worship and serve *Idols*, and *strange Gods*, as the *Ethnicks*, and such like, but also all those that

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(s) The Second Part of the *Homily of The Right use of the Church*.

‘ worship and serve the true God of Heaven, *after their own Fantasie, or after the Traditions of Men, without Faith, without the Word of God, and otherwise than God hath commanded them.* This is indeed a terrible Passage; and it is the Terroure of what is in it, that hath made you to be what you are: But it is none of you, ’tis a very Reverend Bishop of the Church of England that hath written it; and in the same Confession hath he also written, ‘ That upon pain of deadly Sin, to forbid and command Things that indeed are but Indifferent, is the only Note and Mark by which to know Antichrist. Our more conformable Friends in the Church of England hear not you calling them Idolaters, and yet they, as well as you, will own, That the Surplice made an Appurtenance of Divine Worship, the Cross in Baptism, and Kneeling before the Eucharist, and the like, are Things introduced in the Service of the true God of Heaven, *after their own Fantasie, and after the Traditions of Men, and without the Word of God, and otherwise than God hath commanded.* If therefore you decline such Things, the Church of England will certainly excuse you, while you have the Confession of Faith publish’d by its own Bishops, thus charming you so to do; especially since there are of the Bishops Dr. Taylor for one, who acknowledg’d, That the Sign of the Cross, as now retain’d, is a Part of external Worship, tho’ it be an Uninstituted Ceremony. The Church of England, with all Protestants, will grant you, That all Worship of God, not appointed, is unlawful; and that no Power on Earth can add any Thing to the Worship of God. Dr. Sherlock (t) himself will grant you, ‘ That such significant Ceremonies as are meerly for Signification in the Christian Religion, do only obscure and debase, and are only fit for the Entertainment of Children. And you, finding that the Ceremonies now used by the Conformable in the Church of England, are used and urged

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(t) Answer to Prot. Reconciler, p. 56.

as *direct Expressions* of the reverence of the Heart unto God, cannot look on them as any other than *Parts of external Worship*, the *Invention* whereof is forbidden in the *Second Commandment*. Now, if you are deliver'd from the *Yoke* of these unhappy *Ceremonies*, I know not why you should thereby come to be by the *Church of England* worse look'd upon than the most famous *Divines* of that *Church*, who in their best *Writings* are still groaning for a *Deliverance*. Will the *Church of England* renounce *Bishop Bilson* for saying, 'That the *Reformed Churches* are so far from admitting the full *Dose* of the *Heresies* of the *Papists*, that by no Means they can digest a *Dram* of their *Ceremonies*? Will they renounce *Dr. Humphrey*, for saying, 'That we ought to refuse to conform unto the *Enemies* of God in any of their *Ceremonies*, and that he wished and hoped for the utter abolishing of all the *Monuments* of *Popish Superstition* which yet remain in our *Church*? Will they renounce *Dr. More*, for saying, That, 'It is an *Antichristian* use of *Church-Government*, to direct it unto the upholding of *Scandalous Ceremonies*, and the ensnaring *Inventions* of Men? A thousand more such *Passages* occur in the *Writings* of the *Divines*, who have all along been reputed the *Fathers* of the *Church of England*. (u) Will the *Church* now renounce these *Divines*? Let them! And you, my *Brethren*, I am confident, will be glad of their *Company*. But I suppose there is another *Thing* that a little stumbles you; and that is this: If *Conformity* to the *Ceremonies* be necessary to render one a *Church of England Man*, why should not *Non-conformity* exclude one as well as another from that *Character*? *Supra-conformity* is no less *Non-conformity* than *Subter-conformity*. Multitudes in *England* continually Go beyond the *Rule of Conformity*; why should not these be *Non-conformists* as well as they that fall short of it? It is Enacted,

(u) See a Collection in *De laun's Plea for the Non-conformists*.

ted, ' That no Form or Order of Common-Prayer, Administration of Sacraments, Rites, Ceremonies, shall be openly used in any Church, Chapel, or other publick Place, of or in any Colledge or Hall, in either of the Universities, the Colledges of *Westminster, Winchester, or Eaton*, or any of them, other than what is prescribed and appointed to be used in and by the Book of *Common-Prayer*. Now in that Book, there are no where found several *Ceremonies* now practised, nor *Orders* used in many of the *publick Churches*. *Non-conformity* being indeed nothing but a varying from the Rule establish'd; the *Addition* made by some to that Rule, one would think should be *Non-conformity*, as well as the *Substraction* made by others: And the Churches that perform the Worship of Christ with *Organs* be *Non-conformists* as well as they that omit the *Cross*, and some other Superfluities. I'll only touch upon this *One Instance* instead of many; the *Rubrick* requires, That the *Communion-Table* shall stand in the *Body of the Church*, or in the *Chancel*, and the *Priest* shall stand at the *North-side of the Table*; so making it a *Table* according to the other Churches of the *Reformation*; (which accordingly they observe in the *Temple*, where the *Law* is best understood and practised;) and yet in opposition to Authority in most Places, they set it *North and South*, clapping it unto the Wall at the *East-end* of the Church, with *Rails* before it, as if (according to the Church of *Rome*) it were an *Altar*. This is *contrary to the Law*; and I have read, ' This one Thing may well be thought for to have given Encouragement unto the *Non-conformists* in some other Cases. Briefly, If you must be no Part of the Church of *England*, because you don't kneel at the *Communion*, I pray let the *Priest* who does not stand where by the *Law of Conformity* he ought to stand at the *Communion*, be discarded also! Tho' furious Bigots for *Conformity* will give no Answer but *Railing* to all of this Reason; yet you, my *Bretbren*, will calmly afford a reasonable At-

ention to it. But you must by the way be prevailed withal to cease *wondring* at such *Contradictions*. If they seem wonderful to you, you'll find continual Matter of Wonderment: For Instance, The Scripture commands us, *Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers*; but the *Apocrypha* contradicts it, *Eccles. 11. 34.* dissuading us from *Receiving a Stranger into our House*. The Scripture commands us, *Love your Enemies, do good to them that hate you; be like your heavenly Father, who makes the Sun to rise upon the evil and the good*; but the *Apocrypha* contradicts it, *Eccles. 12. 4, 7.* Give to the godly Man, and help not a Sinner; and again, Give to the Good, and help not the Sinner. No Argument could prevail with our *Unreformables* to expunge these Lessons; but in the Month of *October* these Lessons of the *Apocrypha* must be read as the *Doctrines* of the *Church of England*: And then you must subscribe, That nothing is ordain'd to be read, but the very pure Words of God, or that which is agreeable to them. An abundance of such *Contradictions* will accost you, in that which with a *Contradiction* equal to the rest, would be call'd, *The only Church of England*.

If it be now objected against you, That the *Dislike* of the *COMMON-PRAYER* is a Thing that will utterly debar you from any Part in the *Church of England*; it will be no Defence for you to plead, That Old King *James* himself, a great Patron to the *Church of England*, called the *Common-Prayer*, An ill-said *Mass* in *English*; for he was yet with the *Kirk* of *Scotland* when he so called it. But you may defend your selves by this, That several *Bishops* in the *Church of England*, namely, *Williams, Prideaux, Brownrig, Hacket*, with Arch-Bishop *Usher* in the Head of them, disliked the *Common-Prayer* so much, as to present unto the *English Parliament* no less than *Thirty-five* Exceptions against several Things in it, calling for a *Reformation*. If their *Exceptions* did not forfeit their Claim to be of the *Church*, why should yours?

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Perhaps they'll complain of you, That you do not use the LORD's PRAYER as a *Form*. If they do, you may stop the Complaint, by citing to them not only an Army of the *Ancients*, but one who has been a great Oracle to the Church of England, even Grotius himself, declaring, That our Lord bound not his Disciples to the use of those Words and Syllables. If he did, why does the Church of England it self presume to alter them? In the Common-Prayer-Book the Form still is, *Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that Trespase against us.* The Church of England herein varies from the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ: In Matthew his Words are, *Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors:* In Luke his Words are, *Forgive us our Sins, for we forgive every one that is indebted unto us.* Why must you be tied unto a *Form* of Words? The Church of England, even when most pretending to a *Form*, will not be tied, even to *That* for which there is the most pretence. The Infatuation discover'd by the Common-Prayer thus altering the Form and Phrase of the Lord's Prayer, deserves to be consider'd! It may be, when you have silenced some of those froward Children in Christianity, from insisting on all their other Impertinencies, they will still refuse to visit your Assemblies, because the Houses wherein you hold them, are not so Fine and Gay as many of their publick Churches. But you may presently shew them, That the Gawdy Trimmings bestow'd on some of their Churches are directly contrary to the Church of England. For the Homily against the Peril of Idolatry, expressly declares against the Abuses of Churches and Temples, by too costly and sumptuous decking and adorning of them. (w)

These and such Points might be improv'd much more largely, to demonstrate, That you are indeed among the TRUEST SONS of the True Church of England: But what needs any more, since 'tis a Maxim,
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(w) The Third Part of the Homily against the Peril of Idolatry.

(and there is no need of quoting *Avicen* for the Maxim) *Quicquid sufficientiæ additur, superfluitati ascribitur?* All that you will now demand of me, is to describe clearly and fairly to you, *What is that NEW CHURCH of England* whereto you do not belong, and I suppose, are not very willing to belong? 'Tis very certain, there is a *Party* in the *English Nation* usurping the Name of the *Church of England*, whereto it will be as little your *Honour* as 'tis your *Desire* to be *United*; and which (as one says) differs as much from the *OLD CHURCH of England*, as *Nebuchadnezzar* grazing among *Beasts* in the *Field*, from *Nebuchadnezzar* sitting on his glittering *Throne*.

Know then, my *Brethren*, That by a prevailing *Faction* in *England*, the *Canon-Law* which pretends to *Form* the *Church of England*, hath been more than once alter'd, since the *Family* of the *Stewarts* came to sit on the *Throne of Great Britain*; and the *Alteration* hath now made a *New Church* in *England* of quite another kind, than what was before. There is now establish'd by *Law* a *National Church*, which the *Canons* do (tho' *Arch-Bishop Whitgift* a little before durst not) affirm to be a *True and Apostolical Church*. The *Bishops*, which before then, durst as well have eaten *Fire* as have pretended to be as *Diocesan Bishops*, any other than the *King's Officers*, do by the *Canons* now lay *Claim* to a *Divine Right*. But because it puzzles them to make the *King*, who is not a *Person in Orders*, the *Head of the Church*, having these *Officers* under him, and yet for to make the *Arch-Bishop of Canterbury* the *Head of the Church*, is *Treason*; here they are in *Confusion*: And I suppose, you my *Brethren*, will not ask to be of *this Church* till you see them extricated out of this *Confusion*. To proceed, In the *National Church* thus establish'd, there are *Twenty-six Diocesses*, which the *Canons* make *particular Churches* of the lowest *Rank*; and tho' there be such vast *Numbers* of *Parishes* in these *Diocesses*, the *Canons* have utterly divested them

them of the Character of *particular Churches*, which once they had something of, and they make no more than *Twenty-six Churches*, and no more than *Twenty-six Pastors* in the whole Kingdom of England. The *Parish-Presbyters* are by the *Canons* altogether strip'd of all Power to *Ordain*, or to *Confirm*, or to *Excommunicate*; tho' once there was a *Power of Jurisdiction* conceded unto them, which then made the Old *Non-conformists* to look on the *Parish-Ministers* as *Pastors*, and the *Parishes* as retaining the Substantials of *particular Churches*. You, my Brethren, have been ready to say with Dr. Goodwin, 'In some of the *Parishes* of the Kingdom, there are many godly Men that constantly give up themselves unto the Worship of God in publick, and meet together in one Place, to that end, in a constant way, under a godly Ministry whom they themselves have chosen to cleave unto, (tho' they did not chuse him at first;) these, notwithstanding their mixture and want of Discipline, I never thought, for my part, but they were true Churches of Christ. But now the *Diocesan Church-Government* being by Canon establish'd, the *Parishes* are no more allow'd any of them to be *particular Churches*. Arch-Bishop Laud labouring for a full Settlement of this New Church-State, perisb'd in the way: But upon the Restauration of King Charles II. the Labours of the *New Set*, for to obtain Laud's Model, found more Success. In those places of the *Common-Prayer*, where they found the Word [*Pastor*] they blotted it out, and put in *Priest*, or *Curate*. And in the New Book of *Ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, not only the *Execution* of the Office, but the very Office of a *Priest* is taken away from all that have not *Episcopal Ordination*. The *Epistles* and *Gospels* to be formerly read at the *Ordination* of *Priests*, which referred unto the *Pastoral Office*, are now to be read only at the *Consecration* of a *Bishop*. All *Presbyterian Ordinations* were declar'd null and void by the memorable *Act of Uniformity*, and they that had no more were pronounc'd

nounc'd as *naturally Dead*. This *Diocesan Church of England*, according to *Canon*, receives to *Baptism* the Children of all *Parents*, (be they *Jewish* or *Pagan*) that are brought unto the *Minister*. And every *Baptized Inhabitant* within the *Diocese*, if he be not *Excommunicated*, or doth say, That he heartily desires the *Lord's Supper*, is admitted unto that *Sacrament* also, if he will take it according to the *Form* in the *Liturgy*, (by the common *Custom* of the *Church*) altho' he be never so ungodly. Whatever *Admonitions* the *Rubric* or *Canons* do give against admitting the *Wicked* unto the *Sacraments*, 'tis yet abundantly provided in them, That the *Administrator* shall be incapable of excluding the wickedest alive. But at the same Time, (x) all those who *refuse to Kneel at the reception of the Sacrament*, or who *refuse to be present at Publick Prayers*, according to the *Order of the Church of England*; which *Orders* be, (y) *Reverently to Kneel*, when the *General Confession*, *Litany*, and other *Prayers* are read, and *Stand up at the saying of the Belief*, and *Bow at the Name of Jesus*, and *Say in their due place*, and audibly with the *Minister*, the *Confession*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Creed*, and make such other *Answers* to the *Publick Prayers* as are appointed in the *Book of Common-Prayer*; all such as *refuse to do any of these Things*, are to be denied the *Communion*; and what *Minister* soever shall wittingly admit them, he is liable to *Suspension*. Yea, whosoever affirms, That the *Church of England*, as by *Law* thus establish'd, is not form'd according to *Divine Institution*, (or *Apostolical*) is *ipso facto* to be look'd upon as *Excommunicated*. (z) This is the *Roaring* of the *Ecclesiastical Canons*, and the *Clergy* by their *Oath of Canonical Obedience*, are sworn to observe these as well as the rest of the *Canons*. My Brethren, while you be-

(x) See *Can.* 27.

(y) See *Can.* 18.

(z) See *Can.* 3, 4, 6, 7.

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long to the CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND, you have all the Reason imaginable to hear it, and bear it, and own it patiently, if you be told that you do not belong unto this DIOCESAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND. For, *First*, If I be not mistaken, this presumptuous CANONICAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND has *Excommunicated* the best of *Princes*, (notwithstanding its pretended *Loyalty*) if they do but offer to contest any Part of its Constitution; and it will be no Dishonour unto you to be partakers with such illustrious Heads, in suffering these *Contradictions of Sinners*. Perhaps you'll be surpriz'd at this; but if any *Princes* or *Parliaments*, who declare, That they who cannot use the *Ceremonies* of the *Church of England*, may be Men of very good *Conscience*, escape an *Excommunication* by the *Sixth Canon* of the *Church*, which is, *Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, That the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by Law establish'd, are such as being commanded by lawful Authority, Men who are zealously and godlily affected, may not with any good Conscience approve them, use them, or subscribe unto them, let him be Excommunicated ipso facto*: I doubt the *Eighth Canon* bears too hard upon them. According to that, *Whosoever shall hereafter affirm or teach, That the Form and Manner of making and consecrating Bishops, Priests, or Deacons, containeth any Thing in it that is repugnant unto the Word of God, let them be Excommunicated ipso facto, and not be restor'd until he repent, and publickly revoke such his wicked Error*. That *Form* does assert, That *Bishops* and *Priests* are distinct Orders in *Christ's Church*; and that it is evident unto all Men diligently reading the *Holy Scriptures*, that from the *Apostles Time* they have been so. Now suppose any *Princes* give the *Royal Assent* unto an *Act* for the extirpation of *Bishops* in one of the *Three Kingdoms*; have they not very emphatically taught us, That this Assertion in the *Form of consecrating Bishops and Priests*, is not according to the *Word of God*? Have they

they not very sufficiently affirm'd, That the *Word of God* obliges us not for to acknowledge *Bishops* of an *Order distinct* from other *Ministers* in the *Church of Christ*? We'll suppose they have somewhere or other in expresse Terms, (a) *abolish'd Prelacy and Superiority in any Office in the Church above Presbyters*; and declar'd and ordain'd the (b) *Government of the Church* there, by *Presbyters without Bishops*, to be the only true and proper *Government thereof*. I am certain, this is to proclaim it with a witness, That the *Superiority of Bishops*, as an *Order above Presbyters*, is not *Instituted in the Word of God*. And at the same Time it is to maintain, That the *Doctrine of the Form of making Bishops and Priests*, which asserts that *Superiority of Order to be of Divine Right*, is repugnant unto the *Word of God*. These *Princes* it seems, (which indeed I abhor to mention) stand excommunicated *ipso facto*, by the *Eighth Canon of the Church of England*, until they repent and publicly revoke the wicked Errors committed in abolishing that *Prelacy*.

This *CANONICAL CHURCH* continuing to offer such Affronts unto Majesty, you may well decline to be any Part of it, until they repent and publicly revoke their wicked Canons. But that which may confirm you in this aversion to that Church, is the Wrong which those *Canons* do to all the *Ministers* of the Lord Jesus Christ in the World. For according to them, none of the *Scotch, or Dutch, or French Ministers*, nor any of your own, are true *Ministers* of the Lord Jesus Christ, while they want *Episcopal Ordination*. Albeit, the famous Mr. Selden has out of *Eutychius* prov'd, That not only *Bishops*, but *Patriarchs* themselves, were in the *Primitive Times Ordain'd by Presbyters*; yet now, forsooth, according to our *New Church*, none may

(a) They are the expresse Words of the *Act abolishing Prelacy*, July 5. 1689.

(b) The *Act restoring Presbytery*, July 25. 1689.

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may be own'd for so much as *Presbyters*, but such as have been *Ordain'd* by *Diocesan Bishops*. And therefore, altho' this *Canonical Church* will admit a *Popish Priest* upon his *Abjuration*, to be a Minister without *Re-ordination*, it will not without *Re-ordination*, admit any of these who are the best of *Protestants*. Yea, and when this *Church* has admitted any unto its *Ministry*, it presently strips them of their *Rights* that are essential to all *true Ministers* of the Lord *Jesus Christ*. And here I will not insist on this, That by the *Canons* of this *Church*, its own Ministers have not so much as *Liberty* for one *Occasional Prayer* of their own left unto them. All the *Conformists* are by the *Thirty-sixth Canon* to subscribe *ex animo*, a *Covenant*, That they will use the *Form* in the *Book of Common-Prayer*, *prescrib'd* in *Publick Prayer* and *Administration of the Sacraments*, and **NONE OTHER**. Indeed a *Custom* for Ministers to pray without *Book* in the *Pulpit*, is conniv'd at; but in as much as they are *Publick Prayers*, I know others besides *Mr. Baxter*, who doubt them to be a *Breach* of the *Canon-Covenant*. I pass from this, to say, I suppose you are desirous to acknowledge all the *Parish-Presbyters* faithfully feeding their willing *Flocks* in the *Realm*, notwithstanding their *Conformity* to be *True Ministers* of the *Gospel*; but their own *Canons*, even those to which they themselves have sworn, do all they can to forbid your doing so. For you, and they too, must readily own, That unto the *Office* of a *Minister* of the *Gospel*, here are two *Things Essential*, namely, *Obligation to Teach*, and *Authority to Rule* the *Flock*. Whereas the *Canons*, whatever they require in some *Clauses*, do evidently release the *Parish-Minister* from *Obligation to Teach*, by providing, That the *Sacraments* are not to be refused at the *Hands of Unpreaching Ministers*. And the whole *Authority to Rule*, is by the *Canons* reserv'd unto the *Bishop*, to be executed by his *Lay-Chancellor*; so that the *Parish-Minister* cannot exclude the veriest *Infidel* in

the World from the *Sacraments*, if a certain *Lay-Chancellor* do order his Reception. Briefly, No *Ordain'd Priest* may take upon him, to Expound any *Scripture*, or *Matter*, or *Doctrine*, (or do any more than read) so much as to his own *Family*, till he have a *License* from his *Ordinary*. And he then too has no more Power than any *Lay-man* to *censure* an *Offender*, or to judge who are worthy to be *censur'd*. Tho' the *Rubric* and *Canon* do seem sometimes to favour the *Significancy* of the *Curates*, yet elsewhere it the more inexcusably renders them utterly *Insignificant*. Doubtless you will wonder how that the *Clergy* themselves can with *Patience* endure to be so nullified, as they are by this their *Canonical Church*, or to see themselves more honour'd by you that are *Non-conformists* than they are by their own *Canons*! But you are sensible what *Force* it is that obliges them unto their *Patience*. To see the *Ministers* of the Gospel so *Degraded* as they are by the *Canons*, gives Offence unto you, if not unto them; and methinks it should be no Offence unto them, that you take this Offence on *their* behalf.

A Third Prejudice that you'll easily take up against this **CANONICAL CHURCH**, is the *Number* and *Figure* of those many other good Men, (besides *Princes* and *Parliaments*) whom they have *Excommunicated*. This *Laodicean Church* may admire her own *Charity*, (that is to say, the *Easiness* of her *Discipline* as well as the *Openness* of her *Communion* towards the worst of Men) but she has the most *Excommunicating* and most *Anathematizing Charity* that ever was in the World. For by the *Canons* of that Church, 'Whoever shall
' affirm, (c) That the *Church of England* by Law esta-
' blish'd, is not an *Apostolical Church*, or that its Wor-
' ship is Corrupt, or that any of the 39 Articles are in
' any part Erroneous, or that the Rites and Ceremonies
' of the *Church of England* may not be used with a
' good

(c) See Can, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

(d) See

' good Conscience, or that the Government of the
 ' Church by *Arch-Bishops, Bishops, &c.* is repugnant to
 ' the Word of God, or that the *Form or Manner of*
 ' *making or consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons,*
 ' containeth any thing in it repugnant to the Word of
 ' God, all these are to be Excommunicated *ipso facto*.
 Now, Sirs, you'll find perhaps the bigger Part of the
 godly People in *England*, even among the *Conformists*
 themselves, to be by one or other of these Clauses
Excommunicated: That is to say, they are *Excommuni-*
cated out of the CANONICAL CHURCH into the
 CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND: And
 I hope they will be content with their Condition, and
 not *thrust* themselves upon the Party that has *Excom-*
municated them. However, that you may be sure of
 being driven both *out of*, and *into* the same Church with
them, hark how these *Canons* do further *Thunder!* (d)
 ' Whosoever shall maintain, That there are within the
 ' *Realm* [and Note by the way, That all the *English*
 Plantations, particularly *Barbadoes, Jamaica, Bermudas,*
New-England, New-York, Virginia, Carolina, all which
 have *Non-conformist Meetings* in them, do belong to the
Ecclesiastical Realm of *England*, as being Part of the
 Bishop of *London's* Diocess;] ' other Meetings, Assem-
 ' blies, or Congregations of the King's-born Subjects,
 ' than such as by the Law of the Land are held and
 ' allow'd, which may rightly challenge to themselves
 ' the Name of *true and lawful Churches*, let them be
 ' *Excommunicated*, and not restored but by the *Arch-*
 ' *Bishop*, after Repentance and Publick Revocation of
 ' such *their wicked Errors*. You see, Sirs, that either
 you are that *Church of England* which the Law holds
 and allows, or else you stand *Excommunicated*. But I
 assure my self, you are not ambitious to be reckon'd
 of that Party which has *Excommunicated* all the Con-
 gregations of the *Non-conformists*. Nor will it bring
 C c 2 you

(d) See Can. 11.

you under the Brand of *Schismatics*, if being thus Excommunicated *ipso facto*, you settle your selves in the Communion of Churches that will receive you. And this the rather, lest you should be found in the TREASONABLE PLOT, whereof the famous Mr. Baxter among others, has convicted that Party, namely, That of attempting a *Revolt unto a Foreign Jurisdiction*. Albeit the *Canons* of the Church, (and the *Articles* also) whereto these Men are sworn, do most expressly renounce all such *Foreign Jurisdiction*; yet such is the Confusion whereinto the perfidious Builders of *Babel* run themselves, that according to the *New Church of England*, (e) 'The Colledge of *Bishops* through all the World, are the Supream, Universal, Visible Sovereign reign of the *Catholick Church*, having Power of Universal Government; That they are to exercise it in General Councils, where every Bishop is by Office the Representative of his *Diocesan Church*; That these Bishops are to have *Metropolitans* and *Patriarchs*, and the Pope of *Rome* is to be their *Uniting Head*, and ex officio the President of the Councils; That in the Intervals of these Councils, they are *per literas formatas*, to exercise their Power over all the World; That all that will not unite with the Church of *Rome*, (which is to be distinguish'd from the Court of *Rome*) on these Terms, are *Schismatics*; but they that will, are no *Papists*; none being *Papists* but they that are for the Pope's absolute Power above *Canons* or *Councils*; That the Church of *Rome* is a true Church, and if it will not impose the *Innovations* of the last Four Hundred Years, it may be united with; but the *Protestant Churches*, which are destitute of *Diocesan Bishops*, are no true Churches, nor their Pastors true Ministers, nor have they any true *Sacraments*, nor *Covenant-Professe* of Salvation. Of

(e) See Mr. Baxter's true History of Councils defended. p. 19. And his whole Book, Against Revolt unto a Foreign Jurisdiction, dedicated unto the late A. B. of Canterbury.

OF such a Church as this, methinks I hear you, and the bigger and better Part of your Brethren, yet groaning under the Shackles of Conformity, resolve, *Come not into their Secret, O my Soul! unto their Assembly, my Tongue, be not thou united!* The most flourishing and glorious Island in the World, will be in perpetual Danger of becoming a *French Province*, except the *Non-conformists* be counted better Parts of the Church of England, than the Men of such dangerous Principles; and except the Sacramental TEST be therefore taken off. But there is the True CHRISTIAN CHURCH of England, which would have the Reformation of Religion carried on according to the Direction of the Sacred Scriptures, and the Intention of the first Reformers, and counts not Christianity to lye in vain Ceremony; which looks on *Diocesan Bishops* as made such by the King and the National Church-Government, as an human, tho' some say useful Policy; which owns the rest of the sound Protestants in the World for Brethren, and would have the Qualifications for the Pastoral Office, and for Communion in special Ordinances, to be no other than what the Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted; which, in fine, is against bringing a Yoke of Slavery upon the brave English Nation in Spirituals or Temporals. And of this Church ye are. God, and the King, and the Parliament, and all sober Men, will reckon you a valuable Part of this Church; while a certain *Hectoring* sort of People in the World, that would be thought the only Church of England, deserve to be counted rather the *Wens*, than any Parts of it, and indeed know not what it is. I beseech you, Sirs, let not the CHURCH OF ENGLAND become a Name of such a *Treasonable Importance*, that it must belong to none but that Faction, whose Religion lyes in *Sainting* their Martyr Charles I. whose Reign was spent in an unnatural Manner, plotting and contriving to undermine and subvert the Religion, Laws, and Liberties of the English Na-

Nation; (h) and who notwithstanding the Shame of the Iron Basilike, it's fear'd would have been another John Basilovitz, if he had prospered in his unnatural War against the Parliament.

And now, my Brethren, if any go to seduce you from your own REFORMED CONGREGATIONS into the more CEREMONIOUS ASSEMBLIES in the Church of England, you are furnish'd with an Answer: Let your Answer be, That you are of the Church of England, and that you cannot better express your being so, than by keeping with your own REFORMED CONGREGATIONS. If the Bishop of London should be offended at the Governours of Barbadoes, or Bermudas, or Carolina, for worshipping of God in the Meetings of the Non-conformists there, the Gentlemen may truly say in their Defence, That they worshipped God with the truest Part of the Church of England in those Parts of America.

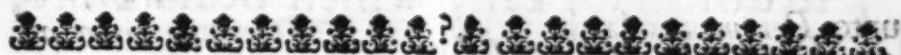
Be advised, my Brethren, to carry it with all possible Moderation and Civility towards those that can conform unto Ceremonies farther than you; Be gentle unto all Men. But yet continue stedfast in your present Non-conformity. The Day is at Hand that will justify your Stedfastness. Even at this Day, the most Conformable themselves confess, That the Rites whereto you are Non-conformists, are indifferent Things, and the Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ is as well without them as with them. Why should you then add those Rites, which in your Consciences are not so indifferent as the Confession of the Conformable would render them, and which will defile your Worship? Even Bishop Sander-son himself expressly says, *If any Man shall use them with an Opinion, as if God's Service could not be rightly perform'd without them, doubtless the Use of such Ceremonies by Reason of such his Opinion, would be superstitious* unto

(h) [The Words of the Earl of Bellemont, in a Speech to a General Assembly]

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unto him. Thus by the *Confession* of the *Conformable*, you are well as you are. Know when you are well. More *Conformity* won't make you better. And if the *Rites* are so *Indifferent*, why should those that urge them for the sake thereof, make a *Difference*? Let them return unto you; there is no Cause why you should go over unto them. Reason and Justice will one Day take place: The Day foretold by the *Bishop of Worcester* before he was a *Bishop*, 'God will one Day convince 'Men, That the *Unity* of the *Church* lyes more in the 'Unity of *Faith* and *Affection*, than in the *Uniformity* 'of doubtful *Rites* and *Ceremonies* (i). You will then be own'd in the *Church of England*; yea, the *Partition Wall* between you and all the other sincere *Protestants* in the *Englisch Nation*, will be taken down.



Part



(i) *Stillingsfleet's Iren.* p. 121.

Part the fourth and last, containing
some faithful *Testimonies to the Cause*
and Work of GOD in the New-English
Churches.

Number I.

The Great END and INTEREST of
NEW-ENGLAND, Stated by the
Memorable Mr. JONATHAN
MITCHEL, Extracted from an In-
strument of His, which bears Date,
Decemb. 31. 1662.

THE CAUSE of the People of GOD in NEW-
ENGLAND, is, RELIGION; That is, the
Profession and Practice of the Truths and Rules of the
Word of GOD.

As, 1 King. VIII. 58, 59. *That He may incline our*
Hearts unto Him, to walk in ALL HIS WAYS, and
to keep His Commandments, and His Statutes, and His
Judgments, which He commanded our Fathers, — The
CAUSE of His People Israel at all Times.

More particularly, REFORMATION of RELI-
GION. There was *Religion* in the Places whence we
came. But NEW-ENGLAND's Design in this vast
Undertaking was REFORMATION; that is, The
avoiding of some special Corruptions, and the vigorous
and more Exact Profession and Practice of the contrary
Truths and Rules, according to *Scripture-Pattern.*

Hence,

Hence, Our *Cause* is not *Separation* from any thing Good in other Churches; whether Truth of Church-State, or any Doctrine rightly professed, or Ordinance rightly administred in them.

But it is REFORMATION, only of what was *Amis* or *Defective* in the Churches we came from.

Yet more *Specially*; if it be ask'd, what REFORMATION? Or, what Particular we are here to seek and set up REFORMATION in? I fully close with Mr. *Hooker's* Discourse, in his Preface before, *Survey of Church-Discipline*; That as the *Prophetical* and *Priestly* Office of CHRIST, was compleatly Vindicated in the First Times of *Reformation*, so now the Great CAUSE and WORK of GOD's *Reforming People*, is, to Clear the Rights of CHRIST's *Kingly* Office, and in their *Practice* to set up His *Kingdom*.

The KINGDOM of CHRIST, tho' it be now distastd as a *Fanatic Notion* — by the Prophaneness of Mens Hearts, which is ready to catch at any Occasion, to blemish it, and to rise up in Rage against the Interest thereof: [Psal. II. 1, 3, 6.] Yet the True KINGDOM of CHRIST, (as the Scripture states it) is Glorious, and Divine, and that for which GOD will *Overturn, Overturn, Overturn*, until it be Erected in its Glory; and (say Men what they will) I will still Pray, *Thy Kingdom Come*.

The KINGDOM of CHRIST is, in general, nothing else but *The Flourishing of RELIGION*, Or that whereby the WORD of CHRIST in the SCRIPTURE, (which is called *the Word of the Kingdom*,) is fully submitted to. In a Word, Then His *Kingdom Comes* in its Glory, when the Will of GOD is *done on Earth as it is in Heaven*: And so far that *Kingdom Comes*, as this *Will* is done.

The KINGDOM of CHRIST, or the Reception and Erecting thereof, is more *Inward* and *Personal*, in the *Hearts* and particular Conversations of Men; more *Outward* and *Publick* in *Societies*.

The *Former* is, when any *Persons* are Converted, and help'd to Walk in New-Obedience; tho' they be never so Few and Obscure. Thus CHRIST has always had a KINGDOM on Earth. And when this reaches unto *Many*, it cannot but become *Visible*, in one Degree or other, and so Inseparable from the Latter. Hence the *General Conversion* of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, will be the Inlet of the Greatest Glory of CHRIST's *Kingdom* on Earth. Hence also, CHRIST has always had a *Kingdom* in some Degree *Visible* in some *Societies* of Men; tho' sometimes very Thin, Low and Obscure, and kept under by Corruptions and Persecutions.

The Latter Erecting of CHRIST's *Kingdom* in whole *Societies*, (whereby CHRIST is seen Ruling all in a Conspicuous and open, in a prevailing and peaceable manner,) was OUR DESIGN and is OUR INTEREST in this Country: tho' with Respect to the *Inward* and *Invisible* KINGDOM, as the Scope thereof. The Public setting up of CHRIST's *Kingdom*, and Enjoyment of those Ordinances and Ways of His, which can only be enjoy'd in whole *Societies*, and that with *Purity* and *Liberty*, was OUR END in coming hither. And this also is CHRIST's Design in these Latter Days; To set up His *Kingdom*, in a Public and Openly prevailing manner, in all the Parts and Ways thereof.

In the *Church*, CHRIST's *Kingdom* is clearly and gloriously set up, when ONLY and ALL His *Institutions*, both in *Worship* and *Discipline* are attended and observed in their Purity and Power, according to Scripture Pattern. [Mat. XXVIII. 18, 23.] THIS is the Great CAUSE and Interest of GOD's People in this Country, and was the Great END of their Undertaking, and hath been the great Matter of this TESTIMONY, in their *Synodical Acts*, and other Writings Published unto the World.

Hence our Great DUTY is to *keep and seek all the Commandments of GOD*, [1 Chron. XXVIII. 8.] in that

that respect; that is, all the Institutions and Ordinances of His House; To *bold fast* what we have attained, that is according to Scripture-Pattern therein, and to *come up* unto what we yet want or are defective in.

Hence also those among us, that desire to set up in this Country, any of the *Ways of Men's Invention* (as, *Prelacy*, stinted *Liturgies*, Humane *Ceremonies* in Worship,) they will bid Defiance to the CAUSE and Interest of CHRIST and of His People, in these Ends of the Earth; and will (I perswade my self) but *lay themselves as Potters Vessels under the Iron Rod*. For, CHRIST, who has taken this *possession of these uttermost parts of the Earth*, will not Endure it. Let us Go forward to any of those Things of CHRIST, that we are wanting in. But to Go backward unto those Things which we know, and have openly Testified [*Platform*, c. 1. and c. 7. Sect. 6.] to be not of GOD, and which we departed from, will be such a *Wickedness* as the Lord's JEALOUSY will not bear withal.

Our Work is not only to depart from Mens *Inventions*, but to set up All [*ALL*] GOD's *Institutions* in their Beauty and Power; that we may Exhibit a clear and complete Copy thereof before the World; and that we and ours may have that full Enjoyment of GOD, in all His Ordinances, that we came hither for.

In the *Common Wealth* CHRIST's Kingdom is set up, when all Things therein are so ordered, (Laws and all Civil Administrations) as doth most fitly and effectually tend to advance, promote, and maintain *Religion* and *Reformation*.

Let us faithfully cleave to the WHOLE INTEREST and KINGDOM of CHRIST, and He can make us a *Burdensome Stone* to all Opposers, as He has done hitherto, [*Zech. XII. 3, 5. Dan. II. 44, 45. Matth. XXI. 44. Isa. LIV. 17.*] and make Good to us, His Promise to *Philadelphia*; To keep our *Door open*, and to preserve us in the *Hour of Temptation* that is upon all the World,

Number II.

The CAUSE of GOD, and His People
in NEW-ENGLAND; Stated in a SER-
MON of the Memorable Mr. JOHN
HIGGINSON, unto the General
Court of the ~~Massachusetts-Co-~~
lony, May 27. 1663.

[On 1 King. VIII. 57, 58, 59.]

‘ THE CAUSE of GOD and His People among
‘ us, is, The *Cause of RELIGION*. — That
‘ every Thing in Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline,
‘ be Conformed to and Regulated by, the Rule of the
‘ WORD.

‘ When the Lord stirred up the Spirits of so many
‘ of His People to come over into this Wilderness, it
‘ was not for *Worldly Wealth*, or a better Livelihood
‘ for the Outward Man. The Generality of the People
‘ that came over, profess’d the contrary; Nor had we
‘ any Rational Grounds to expect such a Thing in such
‘ a Wilderness. Tho’ GOD hath blessed His poor
‘ People here, and there are that have increased here,
‘ from small Beginnings to great Estates; That the
‘ Lord may call this whole Generation to witness. —
‘ O Generation see! Look upon your Towns and
‘ Fields, Look upon your Habitations and Shops, and
‘ Ships, and behold your Numerous Posterity, and
‘ Great Increase in the Blessings of the Land and Sea;
‘ *Have I been a Wilderness unto you?* We must needs
‘ answer, No, Lord, *Thou hast been a Gracious GOD,*
‘ *and Exceeding Good unto thy Servants, even in these*
‘ *Earthly Blessings; we live in a more Plentiful and*
‘ *Com-*

‘ Comfortable manner than ever we did expect. But these
 ‘ are but Additions ; they are but Additional Mercies ;
 ‘ It was Another and Better Thing, that we followed
 ‘ the Lord into the Wilderness for. This is never to be
 ‘ forgotten, That New-England is Originally a Planta-
 ‘ tion of Religion. And if any Man amongst us, make
 ‘ Religion as Twelve, and the World as Thirteen, Let
 ‘ such an One know, he hath neither the Spirit of a
 ‘ True New-England Man, nor yet of a Sincere Chris-
 ‘ tian.

‘ And the Cause is not Separation from any thing
 ‘ Good in other Churches. The End of our Coming
 ‘ hither was a Reformation only of what was Amis or
 ‘ Defective in the Churches we came from. We distin-
 ‘ guish between the Corruptions and Disorders of Chur-
 ‘ ches, and the Churches themselves. So much for the
 Negative.

Now for the Affirmative. ‘ If my weakness was
 ‘ able to shew, what the Cause of GOD and His Peo-
 ‘ ple in New-England is, according to its Divine Ori-
 ‘ ginal and Native Beauty, it would dazzle the Eyes of
 ‘ Angels, daunt the Hearts of Devils, ravish and chain
 ‘ fast the Affections of all the Saints.

‘ First, This was and is our CAUSE, that CHRIST
 ‘ alone might be acknowledged by us, as the only
 ‘ Head, Lord, and Lawgiver in His Church ; That
 ‘ His Written Word might be acknowledged as the
 ‘ Only Rule ; That Only and All His Institutions might
 ‘ be observed, and Enjoyed by us, and that with Purity
 ‘ and Liberty, with Peace and Power.

‘ Secondly, I conceive our CAUSE is not barely a
 ‘ Reformation, but a PROGRESS in Reformation ; To
 ‘ go on unto Perfection. A conceit of having already
 ‘ attain’d a Perfect Reformation, should be far from us.
 ‘ — Our Fathers fled into this Wilderness from the face
 ‘ of a Lording Episcopacy, and Humane Injunctions in the
 ‘ Worship of GOD. Now, if any of us their Chil-
 ‘ dren should yield unto, or be Instrumental to set up
 ‘ in

‘ in this Country, any of the Ways of Men’s Invention,
 ‘ such as *Prelacy*, imposed *Liturgies*, Humane Cere-
 ‘ monies in the Worship of GOD, or to admit *Ignorant*
 ‘ and *Scandalous* Persons to the *Lord’s Table*; This
 ‘ would be a *Backsliding indeed!* It would be a Back-
 ‘ sliding to the Things which we and our Fathers have
 ‘ departed from, and have openly testified against, to
 ‘ be not of GOD.

‘ Thirdly, The *Union of Reformers* belongs unto this
 ‘ CAUSE; For there is not any one Duty more
 ‘ press’d by our Saviour CHRIST and His Apostles,
 ‘ than this of an holy and close Union among those
 ‘ that profess His Name. The best of Men may err;
 ‘ and there being divers Measures of Light and Grace,
 ‘ there cannot but be *Different Apprehensions* in some
 ‘ Things: And therefore, where there is not so full an
 ‘ Agreement as is to be desired, it is our Duty to
 ‘ *forbear one another in Love*, Endeavouring to keep the
 ‘ *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

‘ This is the Chief *Interest* of NEW-ENGLAND;
 ‘ the Matter of greatest Importance in itself, and of
 ‘ greatest Concernment unto us. Whatever may be
 ‘ said of our *Interest* in other respects, yet we may be
 ‘ sure of This, that here lies our *prædominant Interest*
 ‘ and CAUSE; and the Great END for which we
 ‘ came into this Wilderness, and continue in it.

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Number III.

NEW-ENGLAND's True Interest; further Declared, in the Words of the Honourable WILLIAM STOUGH-TON, Esq; in a SERMON preach'd by Him, (in the Audience of the GENERAL COURT, *April 1668.*) when He was a Preacher of the Gospel at *Dorchester*:

From which he was call'd Successively to many Stations of the highest Figure in the *Civil Government*; and when he died was *Commander in Chief* of the PROVINCE.

The *Discourse* is Entituled, *NEW-ENGLAND's True Interest*, From those Words, *Isa. 63. 8. He said surely they are my People, Children that will not lie: So He was their Saviour.*

‘THIS we must know, that the Lord expects great
 ‘ Things of NEW-ENGLAND, above any
 ‘ Nation or People in the World. And His Expecta-
 ‘ tions herein are just and righteous. For
 ‘ As for *special Relation to GOD*; whom hath the
 ‘ Lord more signally exalted than His People in this
 ‘ Wilderness?

— ‘ As for *Extraction and Descent*; O what *Parents*
 ‘ and *Predecessors* may we the most of us look back
 ‘ unto? Thro’ whose Loins the Lord hath stretch’d
 ‘ forth the Line of his *Covenant* to take us in. — As
 ‘ for

for *Restipulations* and *Engagements* back again to GOD; What Awful Publick *Transactions* of this kind have there been among us? — As to our *Advantages and Priviledges* in a Covenant State, here Time and Strength would fail me, to reckon up what we have enjoy'd of this kind. — And then, As to *New-England's FIRST WAYS*; What Glorious Things might be spoken to the praise of *Free Grace*.

But, O! what a sad *Metamorphosis* hath there of later Years past upon these Churches and Plantations? — It must be spoken in the Name of the Lord, O *New-England*, Thy God expects better Things from thee and thy Children; not Worldlynefs; — not an itching after *new Things and Ways* —; not a *drawing loose* in the *Yoke* of God?

Alas! How is *New-England*, in Danger of being lost even in *New-England*? How sadly may we lament it, that *All are not Israel that are now in Israel*? The *First Generation* have been ripen'd Time after Time, and the most of them gather'd in as *Shocks of Corn in their Season*; But we that rise up to tread out the Footsteps of them that are gone before us, Alas! what are we? It is a sad Name, to be stiled *Children that are Corrupters*. [*Isa. 1. 4.*] But are we not indeed many of us *Corrupted*, and that which is far worse, *Corrupters*? How is our *Wine mixed with Water*? Many, (as we may justly fear) would but too soon and too easily entertain a *Lie* in the Worship of God, and return to the *Onions and Garlick of Egypt* again.

The common Interest of the People of God, and of *Us* the Lord's People in special, is, the Interest of *practical Piety and Holiness*; — the Interest of *Unmixed Spiritual Gospel Worship*; — the Interest of *Unity and Peace* in the Ways of *Reformation*: The Interest of *these Things*, and of just and righteous *Liberties* in order thereunto; The Times are coming and hastening more and more, wherein *Faithfulness to God* in all these

these Things, will be the most glorious *Crown* that can be worn upon Earth; A *Crown* upon which it shall be graven, *Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints.* This then is the Word of the Lord to His *New-England Churches, Let no Man take this your Crown from you.*

This Eminent Person goes on, and earnestly Advises the risen and rising Generation of this Land, to make Conscience, not only of *being rightly informed in that Cause of GOD* which we are here wrapt up in, and in adhering to those Things wherein the Lord hath hitherto preserved and blessed His Churches and People, but also of *getting a Sight and View of the Divine Beauty and Glory thereof.* And truly, says He, As to this Cause and Interest of GOD, there can be *no other Foundations laid than those which have been laid.* *New-England's* true and main Interest, the Cause of Christ in His Churches here, It is a fixed and unalterable Thing: It is not now to be found out by any *new Light*, Let us take heed of inquiring of, or listening, in this Matter, unto, the *Determinations and Glosses* of such as have had no *Standing* in the Ways of God here, but have been grafted in upon *By-Accounts*, or move in the *Eccentrick Orb* of some private Interest, distinct from that of the whole. And let us also lay down this as a Rule, *That whatsoever it is that hath been unanimously Rejected and Condemned in its Claims by the acknowledged most eminent Reformers in each Age, since the Apostacy of Antichrist prevailed, this can never in these our Days, justify its Title to that Cause of Christ, that is to be maintained and contended for.*

Number IV.

The TESTIMONY Finished,

By Dr. INCREASE MATHER.

Now these be the Last Words —

HAVING reviewed the Harmonious TESTIMONY of those *Three Worthies* in our *Israel*, our Memorable MITCHEL, our Venerable HIGGINSON, and our Honourable STOUGHTON, unto the CAUSE of GOD in the Churches of NEW-ENGLAND, and the Great END of these Plantations, I do now with my DYING HAND Sign my Concurrence thereunto. I am now in the *Eighty Fourth* Year of my Age, and under a Feebleness in the *Valley of the shadow of Death*, wherein the LORD is yet a *Light unto me*, and makes it but a *Shadow of Death*; and I am every Hour waiting and longing for my *Dismission* to a Better World. In these very singular Circumstances, I am willing to add my TESTIMONY concurrent with the foregoing, and I do *Declare*, That the Principal DESIGN upon which these Colonies were at first Planted, was to *Profess*, and *Practice* and *Enjoy*, with undisturb'd Liberty, the Holy RELIGION of GOD our SAVIOUR, Exhibited in the SACRED SCRIPTURES, and Reformed and Rescued from the *Inventions* and *Abuses*, which the *Man of Sin* has introduced; And, more particularly, To set up CHURCHES [Even of the *Aboriginal Natives*, as well as of *English Christians*] for our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that shall keep themselves *Loyal* to Him, their Glorious KING, in His Word, giving *Law* unto them; and
faith-

faithful to the Religion of the SECOND COMMANDMENT; and free from those *Offensive Things* from which our UNITED BRETHREN, of the *Presbyterian and Congregational Denomination* in the *English Nation* have withdrawn themselves; and which our Honoured and Beloved BRETHREN, in the Renowned Church of SCOTLAND, have abolish'd and abandon'd.

It was equally design'd by those *Followers* of the Lord into the *Wilderness*, when it was a *Land not sown*, That the *pure and undefiled Religion* deliver'd unto us in the *Sacred Scriptures*, (and Exhibited afterwards in our *Confession of Faith*,) should be continually Preach'd, and our *Doctrines of Grace* particularly asserted, by MINISTERS of Good *Abilities*; and Exemplary *Godliness* and *Watchfulness*, freely and fairly chosen by the *Churches* whereof they are to be the *Pastors*. And it also belongs unto the *Glory* of these *Churches*, to be so Constituted, as Livelily to Exhibit the *Kingdom of Heaven* to the World; Both *Debarring* from their Communion such *Ignorant* and *Scandalous* Persons (who can't or won't *Examine themselves*) as are to be shut out from the City of GOD; And *Admitting* of all those (tho' in different *Perswasions* about lesser Points) of whom it may be Judged, *That CHRIST has received them to the Glory of GOD*. Our *Foundation* is in these *Holy Mountains*.

It is now accordingly the DYING WISH, of One that has been about Threescore and Six Years, after a poor manner, but I hope, with some Sincerity, serving the best of Masters, in the blessed Work of the Gospel; That the CHURCHES may *Stand fast* in the *Faith and Order of the Gospel*, and *hold fast* what they have received, and *Let no Man take away their Crown*. And, that the PASTORS would more *Distinctly* from Time to Time, and with proper *Inculcations*, acquaint the *Churches* with their *True Interest*; and those Things which will be their *Beauty* and their

Safety. And considering the Relation which I have heretofore sustain'd as a *President* for Twenty Years, it is highly proper for *me* to leave it as also my more particular Desire, that the *Tutors* in our COLLEGES, from whence the *Churches* expect their *Supplies*, would see to have the *Students* well informed in the Points, which they must Know and Serve, that so the WORK of GOD among us may not be marr'd by falling into Unskilful and Unfaithful Hands.

Indeed, I cannot but go away Rejoicing in it, That the Means, which are indefatigably used, for the drawing of *unwary People* into the *Things that will not profit* them, have had so little Success; and that the Body of the *Sober People* throughout the Country, (so far as I understand) generally continue to discover such a conspicuous Aversion to the Things, from the *Face whereof* their Fathers fled into the *Wilderness*: tho' at the same time, a too general Decay of that Real and Vital Godliness, which is to be the *main Intention* of all, is greatly to be bewailed. But there may be Danger of *Another Generation arising*, which will not know the Lord, nor the Works done by Him, and for Him, among His People here.

And therefore from the Suburbs of that Glorious World, into which I am now Entering, I earnestly Testify unto the *Rising Generation*, That if they sinfully Forsake the GOD, and the Hope, and the Religious Ways of their pious Ancestors, the Glorious LORD will severely punish their *Apostacy*, and be Terrible from His Holy Places unto them.

Now, *The Lord our GOD be with you, as He was with your Fathers; Let Him not leave you, nor forsake you. LORD, Let thy Work appear unto thy Servants, and thy Glory unto their Children!*

Novemb. 10. 1722. 21 OCT 58

The END of the Appendix.

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